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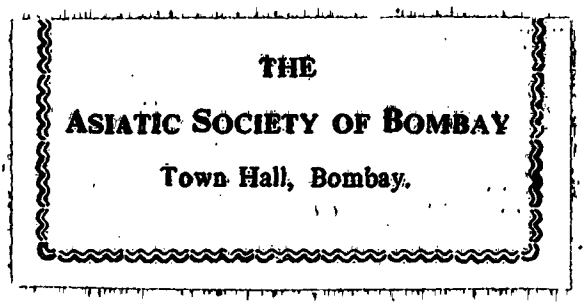

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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MUSSULMAUNS OF INDIA:

DESCRIPTIVE OF THEIR

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, HABITS,

AND

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

MADE DURING A

TWELVE YEARS' RESIDENCE IN THEIR

IMMEDIATE SOCIETY.

BY MRS. MEER HASSAN ALI.

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LETTER XV.

On the birth and management of children in Hindoostaun.—Increase of joy on the birth of a Son.—Preference generally shown to male children.—Treatment of Infants.—Day of Purification.—Offerings presented on this occasion to the child.—The anniversary of the birthday celebrated.—Visit of the father to the Durgah.—Pastimes of boys.—Kites.—Pigeons.—The Mhogdhur.—Sword-exercise.—The Bow and Arrows.—The Pellet-bow.—Crows.—Sports of Native gentlemen.—Cock-fighting.—Remarks upon horses, elephants, tigers, and leopards.—Pigeon-shooting.—Birds released from captivity on particular occasions.—Reasons for the extension of the royal clemency in Native Courts.—Influence of the Prime Minister in the administration of justice.

THE bustle of a wedding in the family of a Mussulmaun having subsided, and the bride become familiar with her new relatives, the mother also reconciled to the separation from her child

by the knowledge of her happiness,—for they are allowed frequent intercourse,—the next important subject which fills their whole hearts with hope and anxiety, is the expected addition to the living members of the family. Should this occur within the first year of their union, it is included in the catalogue of "Fortune's favours," as an event of no small magnitude to call forth their joy and gratitude. Many are the trifling ceremonies observed by the females of this uneducated people, important in their view to the well-being of both mother and infant, but so strongly partaking of superstition, that time would be wasted in speaking of them; I will therefore hasten to the period of the infant's birth, which, if a boy, is greeted by the warmest demonstrations of unaffected joy in the houses both of the parents of the bride and bridegroom. When a female child is born, there is much less clamourous rejoicing at its birth than when a son is added to honour the family; but the good mother will never be dissatisfied with the nature of the gift, who can appreciate the source whence she receives the

blessing. She rests satisfied that unerring Wisdom hath thus ordained, and bows with submission to His decree. She desires sons only as they are coveted by the father, and procures for the mother increased respect from the world, but she cannot actually love her infant less because it is a female.

The birth of a son is immediately announced by a discharge of artillery, where cannon are kept; or by musketry in the lower grades of the Native population, even to the meanest peasant, with whom a single match-lock proclaims the honour as effectually as the volley of his superiors. The women say the object in firing at the moment the child is born, is to prevent his being startled at sounds by giving him so early an introduction to the report of muskets; but in this they are evidently mistaken, since we never find a musket announcing the birth of a female child. They fancy there is more honour attached to a house were are many sons. The men make them their companions, which in the present state of Mussulmaun society, girls cannot be at any age.

Besides which, so great is the trouble and anxiety in getting suitable matches for their daughters, that they are disposed to be more solicitous for male than female children.

Amongst the better sort of people the mother very rarely nourishes her own infant; and I have known instances, when a wet-nurse could not be procured, where the infant has been reared by goats' milk, rather than the good lady should be obliged to fatigue herself with her infant. The great objection is, that in Mussulmaun families nurses are required to be abstemious in their diet, by no means an object of choice amongst so luxurious a people. A nurse is not allowed for the first month or more to taste animal food, and even during the two years—the usual period of supporting infancy by this nourishment—the nurse lives by rule both in quality and quantity of such food only as may be deemed essential to the well-being of the child.

The lower orders of the people benefit by their superiors' prejudices against nursing, and a wet-nurse once engaged in a family becomes a member of that house to the end

of her days, unless she chooses to quit it herself.

On the fourth day after the birth of a son, the friends of both families are invited to share in the general joy testified by a noisy assembly of singing-women, people chattering, smell of savoury dishes, and constant bustle; which, to any other females in the world would be considered annoyances, but in their estimation are agreeable additions to the happiness of the mother, who is in most cases screened only by a curtain from the multitude of noisy visitors assembled to rejoice on the important event. I could not refrain, on one of these occasions, remarking on the injudicious arrangement at such a time, when I thought quiet was really needed to the invalid's comfort. The lady thought otherwise; she was too much rejoiced at this moment of her exaltation to think of quiet; all the world would know she was the mother of a son; this satisfied her for all that she suffered from the noisy mirth and increased heat arising from the multitude of her visitors, who stayed the usual time, three days

and nights. The ladies, however, recover their strength rapidly. They are attended by females in their time of peril, and with scarcely an instance of failure. Nature is kind. Science has not yet stepped within the confines of the zeenahnah. All is Nature with these uneducated females, and as they are under no apprehension, the hour arrives without terror, and passes over without weakening fears. They trust in God, and suffer patiently. It may be questioned, however, whether their pains at that juncture equal those of females in Europe. Their figure has never been tortured by stays and whalebone; indeed, I do not recollect having met with an instance of deformity in the shape of any inhabitant of a zeenahnah.

On the ninth day the infant is well bathed,—I cannot call any of its previous ablutions a bath,—then its little head is well oiled, and the fillet thrown aside, which is deemed necessary from the first to the ninth day. The infant from its birth is laid in soft beaten cotton, with but little clothing until it has been well bathed,

and even then the dress would deserve to be considered more as ornamental covering than useful clothing; a thin muslin loose shirt, edged and bordered with silver ribands, and a small skull-cap to correspond, comprises their dress. Blankets, robes, and sleeping-dresses, are things unknown in the nursery of a zeenahnah. The baby is kept during the month in a reclining position, except when the nurse receives it in her arms to nourish it; indeed for many months the infant is but sparingly removed from its reclining position. They would consider it a most cruel disturbance of a baby's tranquillity, to set it up or hold it in the arms, except for the purpose of giving it nourishment.

The infant's first nourishment is of a medicinal kind, composed of umultass (casia), a vegetable aperient, with sugar, and distilled water of anniseed; this is called gootlie, and the baby has no other food for the first three days, after which it receives the nurse's aid. After the third day a small proportion of opium is admi-

nistered, which practice is continued daily until the child is three or four years old.

The very little clothing on infants in India would of itself teach the propriety of keeping them in a reclining position, as the mere natural strength of the poor baby has nothing to support it by the aid of bandages or clothing. The nurse receives the baby on a thin pillow of calico quilted together, called gooderie; it is changed as often as required, and is the only method as yet introduced amongst the Natives to secure cleanliness and comfort to their infants. In the cold season, when the thermometer may range from forty-five to fifty, the method of inducing warmth is by means of cotton or wadded quilts; flannel, as I have said before, they know not the use of. The children, however, thrive without any of those things we deem essential to the comfort of infancy, and the mamma is satisfied with the original customs, which, it may be supposed, are (without a single innovation) unchanged since the period of Abraham, their boasted forefather.

On the fortieth day after the infant's birth,

the same rites are observed as by the Jews, (with the exception of circumcision), and denominated, as with them, the Day of Purification. On this day the infant is submitted to the hands of the barber, who shaves the head, as commanded by their law. The mother bathes and dresses in her most costly attire. Dinner is cooked for the poor in abundance. Friends and relatives call on the mother to present nuzzas and offerings, and to bring presents to the child, after the manner of the wise men's offerings, so familiar to us in our Scriptures. The offerings to the child are often costly and pretty; bangles and various ornaments of the precious metals. The taawees of gold and silver, are tablets on which engraved verses from the Khoraun are inscribed in Arabic characters; these are strung on cords of gold thread, and suspended, when the child is old enough to bear their weight, over one shoulder, crossing the back and chest, and reaching below the hip on the opposite side; they have a remarkably good effect with the rich style of dressing Native children. In some of the offerings from the great people are to be

observed precious stones set in necklaces, and bangles for the arms and ancles. All who visit at these times take something for the baby; it would be deemed an omen of evil in any one neglecting to follow this immemorial custom; not that they are avaricious, but that they are anxious for their infant's prosperity, which these tributes are supposed to indicate.

The mother thus blessed with a darling son is almost the idol of the new family she has honoured; and when such a person happens to be an agreeable, prudent woman, she is likely to remain without a rival in her husband's heart, who has no inducement to add dhollie wives to his establishment when his home is made happy to him by the only wife who can do him honour by the alliance.

The birthday of each son in a family is regularly kept. The term used for the occasion is Saul-girrah—derived from saul, a year, girrah, to tie a knot. The custom is duly maintained by tying a knot on a string kept for the purpose by the mother, on the return of her boy's birthday. The girls' years are numbered

by a silver loop or ring being added yearly to the gurdonie, or silver neck-ring. These are the only methods of registering the ages of Mussulmaun children.

The Saul-girrah is a day of annual rejoicing through the whole house of which the boy is a member; music, fireworks, toys, and whatever amusement suits his age and taste, are liberally granted to fill up the measure of his happiness; whilst his father and mother have each their assemblies to the fullest extent of their means. Dinner is provided liberally for the guests, and the poor are not neglected, whose prayers and blessings are coveted by the parents for their offspring's benefit; and they believe the blessings of the poor are certain mediations at the throne of mercy which cannot fail to produce benefits on the person in whose favour they are invoked.

The boy's nurse is on all occasions of rejoicing the first person to be considered in the distribution of gifts; she is, indeed, only second in the estimation of the parents to the child she has reared and nourished; and with the child,

she is of more consequence even than his natural parents. The wet-nurse, I have said, is retained in the family to the end of her days, and whatever children she may have of her own, they are received into the family of her employer without reserve, either as servants or companions, and their interest in life regarded and watched over with the solicitude of relations, by the parents of the boy she has nursed.

At seven years old the boys are circumcised, as by their law directed. The thanksgiving when the child is allowed to emerge from confinement, gives rise to another jubilee in the family.

At Lucknow we see, almost daily, processions on their way to the Durgah, (before described), where the father conveys the young Mussulmaun to return thanks and public acknowledgments at the sainted shrine. The procession is planned on a grand scale, and all the male friends that can be collected attend in the cavalcade to do honour to so interesting an occasion.

When the prayer and thanksgiving have been

duly offered in the boy's name at the Durgah, money is distributed amongst the assembled poor; and on the way home, silver and copper coins are thrown to the multitude who crowd around the procession. The scrambling and tumult on these occasions can only be relished by the Natives, who thus court popularity; but they rarely move in state without these scenes of confusion following in their train. I have witnessed thousands of people following the King's train, on his visiting the Durgah at Lucknow, when his Majesty and his Prime Minister scattered several thousands of rupees amongst the populace. The noise was deafening, some calling blessings on the King, others quarrelling and struggling to force away the prize from the happy one who had caught, in the passing shower, a rupee or two in his drapery. Some of the most cunning secure the prize in their mouths to save themselves from the plunderer; some are thrown down and trampled under foot; the sandy soil, however, renders their situation less alarming than such a calamity would be in London, but it is altogether a scene

of confusion sufficient to terrify any one, except those who delight in their ancient customs without regarding consequences to individuals.

The amusements of boys in India differ widely from the juvenile sports of the English youth; here there are neither matches at cricket nor races; neither hoops nor any other game which requires exercise on foot. Marbles they have, and such other sports as suit their habits and climate, and can be indulged in without too much bodily exertion. They fly kites at all ages, I have seen men in years, even, engaged in this amusement, alike unconscious that they were wasting time, or employing it in pursuits fitted only for children. They are flown from the flat roofs of the houses, where it is common with the men to take their seat at sunset. They are much amused by a kind of contest with kites, which is carried on in the following manner. The neighbouring gentlemen, having provided themselves with lines, previously rubbed with paste and covered with pounded glass, raise their kites, which, when brought in contact with each other by a

current of air, the topmost string cuts through the under one, when down falls the kite, to the evident amusement of the idlers in the streets or roadway, who with shouts and hurrahs seek to gain possession of the toy, with as much avidity as if it were a prize of the greatest value: however, from the numerous competitors, and their great zeal to obtain possession of it, it is usually torn to pieces. Much skill is shown in the endeavours of each party to keep his string uppermost, by which he is enabled to cut that of his adversary's kite.

The male population are great pigeon-fanciers, and are very choice in their breed, having every variety of the species they can possibly procure; some are brought from different parts of the world at an enormous expense. Each proprietor of a flock of pigeons knows his own birds from every other. They are generally confined in bamboo houses erected on the flat roofs of the mansions, where at early dawn and at sunset the owner takes his station to feed his pets and give them a short airing. Perhaps a neighbour's flock have also emerged from

their cages at the same time, when mingling in the circuit round and round the buildings, (as often happens) one or more from one person's flock will return home with those of another; in which case, they are his lawful prize for ever, unless his neighbour wishes to redeem the captives by a price, or by an exchange of prisoners. The fortunate holder, however, of such prize makes his own terms, which are perhaps exorbitant, particularly if he have any ill-will against the proprietor, or the stray pigeon happen to be of a peculiarly rare kind. Many are the proofs of good breeding and civility, elicited on such occasions between gentlemen; and many, also, are the perpetuated quarrels where such a collision of interests happens between young men of bad feelings, or with persons having any previous dislike to each other.

The chief out-door exercise taken by the youth of India, is an occasional ride on horseback or the elephant. They do not consider walking necessary to health; besides which, it is plebeian, and few ever walk who can maintain

a conveyance. They exercise the moghdhur (dumb-bell) as the means of strengthening the muscles and opening the chest. These moghdhurs, much resembling the club of Hercules, are used in pairs, each weighing from eight to twenty pounds; they are brandished in various ways over the head, crossed behind, and back again, with great ease and rapidity by those with whom the art has become familiar by long use. Those who would excel in the use of the moghdhurs practise every evening regularly; when, after the exercise, they have their arms and shoulders plastered with a moist clay, which they suppose strengthens the muscles and prevents them from taking cold after so violent an exercise. The young men who are solicitous to wield the sabre with effect and grace, declare this practice to be of the greatest service to them in their sword exercise: they go so far as to say, that they only use the sword well who have practised the moghdhur for several years.

At their sword exercise, they practise "the stroke" on the hide of a buffalo, or on a fish

called rooey, the scales of which form an excellent coat of mail, each being the size of a crown-piece, and the substance sufficient to turn the edge of a good sabre. The fish is produced alive from the river for this purpose; however revolting as the practice may appear to the European, it does not offend the feelings of the Natives, who consider the fish incapable of feeling after the first stroke; but, as regards the buffalo, I am told the most cruel inflictions have been made, by men who would try their blade and their skill on the staked animal without mercy.

The lance is practised by young men of good family as an exercise; and by the common people, as the means of rendering them eligible to the Native military service of India. It is surprising to witness the agility of some of the Natives in the exercise of the lance; they are generally good horsemen, and at full speed will throw the lance, dismount to recover it, and remount, often without stirrups, with a celerity inconceivable. I have seen them at these exer-

cises with surprise, remembering the little activity they exhibit in their ordinary habits.

The Indian bow and arrow has greatly diminished as a weapon of defence in modern times; but all practise the use of the bow, as they fancy it opens the chest and gives ease and grace to the figure; things of no trifling importance with the Mussulmaun youth. I have seen some persons seated practising the bow, who were unable to bear the fatigue of standing; in those cases, a heavy weight and pulley are attached to the bow, which requires as much force in pulling as it would require to send an arrow from sixty to a hundred yards from the place they occupy.

The pellet-bow is in daily use to frighten away the crows from the vicinity of man's abode; the pellets are made of clay baked in the sun, and although they do not wound they bruise most desperately. Were it not for this means of annoying these winged pests, they would prove a perfect nuisance to the inhabitants, particularly within the confines of a zeenahnah, where these impudent birds assem-

ble at cooking-time, to the great annoyance of the cooks, watching their opportunity to pounce upon any thing they may incautiously leave uncovered. I have often seen women placed as watchers with the pellet-bow, to deter the marauders the whole time dinner was preparing in the kitchen. The front of these cooking-rooms are open to the zeenahnah court-yard, neither doors, windows, nor curtains being deemed necessary, where the smoke has no other vent than through the open front into the court-yard.

The crows are so daring that they will enter the yard, where any of the children may be taking their meals, (which they often do in preference to eating them under the confinement of the hall), and frequently seize the bread from the hands of the children, unless narrowly watched by the servants, or deterred by the pellet-bow. And at the season of building their nests, these birds will plunder from the habitations of man, whatever may be met with likely to make a soft lining for their nests; often, I am told, carrying off the skull-cap from the

children's heads, and the women's pieces of calico or muslin from their laps when seated in the open air at work.

Many of the Natives are strongly attached to the brutal practice of cock-fighting; they are very choice in their breed of that gallant bird, and pride themselves on possessing the finest specimens in the world. The gay young men expend much money in these low contests: the birds are fought with or without artificial spurs, according to the views of the contending parties. They have also a small bird which they call "the buttaire," a species of quail, which I hear are most valiant combatants; they are fed and trained for sport with much care and attention. I am told these poor little birds, when once brought to the contest, fight until they die. Many are the victims sacrificed to one morning's amusement of their cruel owners, who wager upon the favourite bird with a spirit and interest equal to that which may be found in more polished countries among the gentlemen of the turf.

Horse-racing has very lately been introduced

at Lucknow, but I fancy the Natives have not yet acquired sufficient taste for the sport to take any great delight in it. As long as it is fashionable with European society, so long it may be viewed with comparative interest by the few. But their views of the breed and utility of a stud differ so much from those of a European, that there is but little probability of the sport of horse-racing ever becoming a favourite amusement with them. When they are disposed to hunt, it is always on elephants, both for security and to save fatigue.

A horse of the finest temper, form, or breed, one that would be counted the most perfect animal by an English connoisseur, would be rejected by a Native if it possessed the slightest mark by them deemed "unfortunate." If the legs are not all of a colour, the horse is not worthy; if an unlucky turn of the hair, or a serpentine wave of another colour appears on any part of the animal, it is an "omen of ill-luck" to the possessor, and must not be retained on the premises. A single blemish of the sort would be deemed by a Native gentleman as great a fault in an other-

wise perfect animal, as if it could only move on three legs. The prejudice is so strongly grounded in their minds to these trifling marks, that they would not keep such horses in their stables one hour, even if it belonged to their dearest friend, fearing the evil consequences that might befall their house.

The swiftness of a good English hunter would be no recommendation to a Native gentleman; he rides for pleasant exercise and amusement, and the pace therefore never exceeds the gentlest canter of an English lady's jennet. Many of their horses are trained to a pace I have never remarked in other countries; it is more than a walk but not quite a canter, the steps are taken very short, and is, I am assured, an agreeable exercise to the rider. I was once in possession of a strong hill pony, whose walk was as quick as the swiftest elephant; very few horses could keep up with him at a trot. The motion was very easy and agreeable, particularly suited to invalids in that trying climate.

The Native method of confining horses in their sheds or stables appears somewhat remark-

able to a European. The halter is staked in the ground, and the two hind legs have a rope fastened to each; this is also staked in the ground behind. The ropes are left sufficiently long to allow of the animal lying down at his pleasure.

The food of horses is fresh grass, brought from the jungles daily, by the grass-cutters, who are kept solely for this purpose. In consequence of these men having to walk a distance of four or more miles before they reach the jungles, and the difficulty of finding sufficient grass when there, one man cannot procure more grass in a day than will suffice for one horse; the consequence is, that if a gentleman keep twenty horses, there are forty men to attend them; viz. twenty grooms, and as many grass-cutters. The grass of India, excepting only during the rainy season, is burnt up by the heat of the sun, in all exposed situations. In the jungles and forests of mango-trees, wherever there is any shade, the men search for grass, which is of a different species to any I have seen in Europe, called doob-grass, a dwarf creeper, common

throughout India; every other kind of grass is rejected by the horse; they would rather eat chaff in the absence of the doob-grass. The refuse of the grass given for food, answers the purpose of bedding; for in India straw is never brought into use, but as food for the cows, buffaloes, and oxen. The nature of straw is friable in India, perhaps induced by climate by the wise orderings of Divine Providence, of which indeed a reflecting mind must be convinced, since it is so essential an article for food to the cattle where grass is very scarce, excepting only during the season of rain.

When the corn is cut, the whole produce of a field is brought to one open spot, where the surface of the ground is hard and smooth; the oxen and their drivers trample in a continued circuit over the whole mass, until the corn is not only threshed from the husks, but the straw broken into fine chaff. They winnow it with their coarse blankets, or chuddahs, (the usual wrapper of a Native, resembling a coarse sheet), and house the separate articles in pits, dug in the earth, close to their habitations. Such things as barns,

granaries, or stacks, are never seen to mark the abode of the Native farmers as in Europe. An invading party could never discover the deposits of corn, whilst the Natives chose to keep their own secret. This method of depositing the corn and chaff in the earth, is the only secure way of preserving these valuable articles from the encroachment of white ants, whose visits to the grain are nearly as destructive, and quite as much dreaded, as the flights of locusts to the green blades.

The corn in general use for horses, sheep, and cattle, is called gram; the flavour resembles our field pea much more than grain. It is produced on creepers, with pods; and bears pretty lilac blossom, not unlike peas, or rather vetches, but smaller; the grain, however, is as large as a pea, irregularly shaped, of a dark brown skin, and pale yellow within. There are several other kinds of grain in use amongst the Natives for the use of cattle; one called moat, of an olive green colour. It is considered very cooling in its nature, at certain seasons of

the year, and is greatly preferred both for young horses and for cows giving milk.

Horses are subject to an infectious disease, which generally makes it appearance in the rainy season, and therefore called burrhsaatie. Once in the stable, the disorder prevails through the stud, unless timely precautions are taken to prevent them being infected—removal from the stable is the most usual mode adopted —so easy is the infection conveyed from one animal to the other, that if the groom of the sick horse enters the stable of the healthy they rarely escape contagion. It is a tedious and painful disorder and in nine cases out of ten the infected animal either dies, or is rendered useless for the saddle. The legs break out in ulcers, and, I am informed, without the greatest care on the part of the groom, he is also liable to imbibe the corruption; if he has any cut or scratch on his hands, the disease may be received as by innoculation.

The Natives have the greatest aversion to docked-tailed horses, and will never permit the

animals to be shorn of the beauty with which Nature has adorned them, either in length or fulness; besides which, they think it a barbarous want of taste in those who differ from them, though they fancy Nature is improved when the long tail and mane of a beautiful white Arab are dyed with mayndhie; his legs, up to the knees, stained with the same colour, and divers stars, crescents, &c., painted on the haunches, chest, and throat of the pretty gentle creature. When the horses are looking rough, the Natives feed them with a mixture of coarse brown sugar and ghee, which they say gives sleekness to the skin, and improves the constitution of the horse. When their horses grow old, they boil the gram with which they feed them, to make it easy of digestion; very few people, indeed, give corn at any age to the animal unsoaked, as they consider it injudicious to give dry corn to horses, which swells in the stomach of the animal and cannot digest: the grain swells exceedingly by soaking, and thus moistened, the horse requires less water than would be necessary with dry corn.

The numberless Native sports I have heard related in this country would take me too long to repeat at present; describe them I could not, for my feelings and views are at variance with the painful tortures inflicted on the brute creation for the perverted amusements of man, consisting of many unequal contests, which have sickened me to think they were viewed by mortals with pleasure or satisfaction. A poor unoffending antelope or stag, perhaps confined from the hour of its quitting its dam in a paddock, turned out in a confined space to the fury of a cheetah (leopard) to make his morning's repast. Tigers and elephants are often made to combat for the amusement of spectators; also, tigers and buffaloes, or aligators. The battle between intoxicated elephants is a sport suited only for the cruel-hearted, and too often indulged. The mahouts (the men who sit as drivers on the neck of the elephant) have frequently been the victims of the ignoble amusement of their noble masters; indeed, the danger they are exposed to is so great, that to escape is deemed a miracle. The fighting-

elephants are males, and they are prepared for the sport by certain drugs mixed up with the wax from the human ear. The method of training elephants for fighting must be left to abler hands to describe. I have passed by places where the animal was firmly chained to a tree, in situations remote from the population of a city, as danger is always anticipated from their vicinity; and when one of these infuriated beasts break from their bonds, serious accidents often occur to individuals before they can again be secured.

Amongst the higher classes tigers and leopards are retained for fields sports, under charge of regular keepers. In many instances these wild inhabitants of the jungle are tamed to the obedience of dogs, or other domestic animals. I have often seen the young cubs sucking the teats of a goat, with which they play as familiarly as a kitten with its mother. A very intimate acquaintance of ours has several tigers and leopards, which are perfectly obedient to his command; they are led out by their keepers night and morning, but he always feeds them

with his own hands, that he may thereby make them obedient to himself, when he sports in the jungles, which he often does with success, bringing home stags and antelopes to grace the board, and distribute amongst his English friends.

The tigers and cheetahs are very generally introduced after breakfast, when Native noblemen have European visitors. I remember on one of these occasions, these animals were brought into the banqueting-room, just as the self-performing cabinet organ had commenced a grand overture. The creatures' countenances were terrifying to the beholder, and one in particular could with great difficulty be reined in by his keepers. The Natives are, however, so accustomed to the society of tigers, that they smiled at my apprehension of mischief. I was only satisfied when they were forced away from the sounds that seemed to fill them with wonder, and perhaps with rage.

Pigeon-shooting is another amusement practised amongst the sporting men of Hindoostaun. I, of course, allude to the Mussulmauns for

most Hindoos hold it criminal to kill a crow, or even the meanest insect; and I have known them carry the principle of preserving life to the minutest insects, wearing crape or muslin over their mouths and noses in the open air, fearing a single animalcule that floats in the air should be destroyed by their breath. For the same reason, these men have every drop of water strained through muslin before it is used either for drinking or for cooking.

There are people who make it a profitable means of subsistence to visit the jungles with nets, in order to collect birds, as pigeons, parrots, minas, &c., these are brought in covered baskets to the towns where they meet with a ready sale.

Many a basket have I delighted in purchasing, designing to rescue the pretty creatures from present danger. I am annoyed whenever I see birds immured in cages. If they could be trained to live with us, enjoying the same liberty, I should gladly court society with these innocent creatures; but a bird confined vexes me, my fingers itch to open the wicket and

give the prisoner liberty. How have I delighted in seeing the pretty variegated parrots, minas, and pigeons, fly from the basket when opened in my verandah! I have sometimes fancied in my evening walk that I could recognize the birds again in the gardens and grounds, which had been set at liberty in the morning by my hand.

The good ladies of India, from whom I have copied the practice of giving liberty to the captive birds, although different motives direct the action, believe, that if any member of their family is ill, such a release propitiates the favour of Heavenly mercy towards them. A sovereign (amongst the Mussulmauns) will give liberty to a certain number of prisoners, confined in the common gaol, when he is anxious for the recovery of a sick member of his family; and so great is the merit of mercy esteemed in the creature to his fellow-mortal, that the birth of a son, a recovery from severe illness, accession to the throne, &c., are the precursors to royal clemency, when all prisoners are set at liberty whose return to society may not be deemed

cruelty to the individual, or a calamity to his neighbours. I may here remark, the Mussulmaun laws do not allow of men being confined in prison for debt. The government of Oude is absolute, yet to its praise be it said, during the first eight years of my sojourn I never heard of but one execution by the King's command; and that was for crimes of the greatest enormity, where to have been sparing would have been unjust. In cases of crime such as murder, the nearest relative surviving is appealed to by the court of justice; if he demand the culprit's life, the court cannot save him from execution. But it is rarely demanded; they are by no means a revengeful people generally; there are ambitious, cruel tyrants to be found, but these individuals are exceptions to the mass of the people. Examples of mercy set by the king in all countries have an influence upon his subjects; and here the family of a murdered man, if poor, is maintained by the guilty party or else relieved by royal munificence, as the case may require. Acts of oppression may sometimes occur in Native states

without the knowledge even, and much less by the command, of the Sovereign ruler, since the good order of the government mainly depends on the disposition of the Prime Minister for the time being. There is no check placed in the constitution of a Native government between the Prime Minister and his natural passions. If cruel, ambitious, or crafty, he practises all his art to keep his master in ignorance of his daily enormities; if the Prime Minister be a virtuous-minded person, he is subjected to innumerable trials, from the wiles of the designing and the ambitious, who strive by intrigue to root him from the favour and confidence of his sovereign, under the hope of acquiring for themselves the power they covet by his removal from office.

LETTER XVI.

Remarks on the trades and professions of Hindoostaun.—The Bazaars.—Naunbye (Bazaar cook).—The Butcher, and other trades.—Shroffs (Money-changers).—Popular cries in Native cities.—The articles enumerated and the venders of them described.—The Cuppers.—Leechwomen.—Ear-cleaners.—Old silver.—Pickles.—Confectionary.—Toys.—Fans.—Vegetables and fruit.—Mangoes.—Melons.—Melon-cyder.—Fish.—Bird-catcher.—The Butcher-bird, the Coel, and Lollah.—Fireworks.—Parched corn.—Wonder-workers.—Snakes.—Anecdote of the Moonshie and the Snake-catcher.—The Cutler.—Sour curds.—Clotted cream.—Butter.—Singular process of the Natives in making butter.—Ice.—How procured in India.—Ink.—All writing dedicated to God by the Mussulmauns.—The reverence for the name of God.—The Mayndhie and Sulmah.

THE various trades of a Native city in Hindoostaun are almost generally carried on in the open air. The streets are narrow, and usually unpaved; the dukhauns (shops) small, with the whole front open towards the street; a

tattie of coarse grass forming an awning to shelter the shopkeeper and his goods from the weather. In the long lines of dukhauns the open fronts exhibit to the view the manufacturer, the artisan, the vender, in every variety of useful and ornamental articles for general use and consumption. In one may be seen the naunbye (bazaar cook) basting keebaubs over a charcoal fire on the ground with one hand, and beating off the flies with a bunch of date-leaves in the other; beside him may be seen assistant cooks kneading dough for sheermaul or other bread, or superintending sundry kettles and cauldrons of currie, pillau, matunjun, &c., whilst others are equally active in preparing platters and trays, in order to forward the delicacies at the appointed hour to some great assembly.

The shop adjoining may probably be occupied by a butcher, his meat exposed for sale in little lean morsels carefully separated from every vestige of fat* or skin; the butcher's

* The fat of meat is never eaten by the Natives, who view our joints of meat with astonishment, bordering on disgust.

assistant is occupied in chopping up the coarser pieces of lean meat into mince meat.* Such shops as these are actually in a state of siege by the flies; there is, however, no remedy for the butcher but patience; his customers always wash their meat before it is cooked, so he never fails to sell even with all these disadvantages. But it is well for the venders of more delicate articles when neither of these fly-attracting emporiums are next door neighbours, or immediately opposite; yet if it even should be so, the merchant will bear with equanimity an evil he cannot control, and persuade his customers for silver shoes or other ornamental articles, that if they are not tarnished a fly spit or two cannot lessen their value.

The very next door to a working goldsmith may be occupied by a weaver of muslin; the first with his furnace and crucible, the latter with his loom, in constant employ. Then the snake-hookha manufacturer, opposed to a mixer of tobacco, aiding each other's trade in their

* Many Hindoostaunie dishes require the meat to be finely minced.

separate articles. The makers and venders of punkahs of all sorts and sizes, children's toys, of earth, wood, or lakh; milk and cream shops; jewellers, mercers, druggists selling tea, with other medicinal herbs. The bunyah (corn-dealer) with large open baskets of sugar and flour, whose whiteness resembles each other so narrowly, that he is sometimes suspected of mixing the two articles by mistake, when certain sediments in sherbet indicate adulterated sugar.

It would take me too long were I to attempt enumerating all the varieties exposed in a Native street of shops. It may be presumed these people make no mystery of their several arts in manufacturing, by their choice of situation for carrying on their trades. The confectioner, for instance, prepares his dainties in despite of dust and flies, and pass by at what hour of the day you please, his stoves are hot, and the sugar simmering with ghee sends forth a savour to the air, inviting only to those who delight in the delicacies he prepares in countless varieties.

The most singular exhibitions in these cities are the several shroffs (money-changers, or bankers), dispersed in every public bazaar, or line of shops. These men, who are chiefly Hindoos, and whose credit may perhaps extend throughout the continent of Asia for any reasonable amount, take their station in this humble line of buildings, having on their right and left, piles of copper coins and cowries.* These shroffs are occupied the whole day in exchanging pice for rupees or rupees for pice, selling or buying gold mohurs, and examining rupees; and to all such demands upon him he is entitled to exact a regulated per centage, about half a pice in a rupee. Small as this sum may seem yet the profits produce a handsome remuneration for his day's attention, as many thousands of rupees may have passed under his critical eye for examination, it being a common practice, both with shopkeepers and individuals, to

* Cowries are small shells imported from the Eastern isles, which pass in India as current coin, their value fluctuating with the price of corn, from sixty to ninety for one pice.

send their rupees to the shroff for his inspection, always fearing imposition from the passers of base coin. These shroffs transact remittances to any part of India by hoondies, which are equivalent to our bills of exchange, and on which the usual demand is two and a half per cent at ninety days, if required for any distant station.

The European order is here completely reversed, for the shopkeeper sits whilst the purchasers are compelled to stand. The bazaar merchant is seated on the floor of his dukhaun, near enough to the open front to enable him to transact business with his customers, who one and all, stand in the street to examine the goods and to be served; let the weather be bad or good, none are admitted within the threshold of the dukhaun. In most places the shops are small, and look crowded with the articles for sale, and those where manufactories are carried on have not space to spare to their customers.

Very few gentlemen condescend to make their own purchases; they generally employ their confidential domestic to go to market

for them; and with the ladies their women servants are deputed... In rich families it is an office of great trust, as they expend large sums and might be much imposed upon were their servants faithless. The servants always claim dustoor (custom) from the shopkeepers, of one pice for every rupee they lay out; and when the merchants are sent for to the houses with their goods, the principal servant in the family is sure to exact his dustoor from the merchant; and this is often produced only after a war of words between the crafty and the thrifty.

The diversity of cries from those who hawk about their goods and wares in streets and roadways, is a feature in the general economy of the Natives not to be overlooked in my brief description of their habits. The following list of daily announcements by the several sonorous claimants on the public attention, may not be unacceptable with their translated accompaniments.

"Seepie wallah deelie sukha," (Moist or dry cuppers).—Moist and dry cupping is performed both by men and women; the latter are most

in request. They carry their instruments about with them, and traverse all parts of the city. The dry cupping is effected by a buffalo's horn and resorted to by patients suffering under rheumatic pains, and often in cases of fever, when to lose blood is either inconvenient on account of the moon's age, or not desirable by reason of the complaint or constitution of the patient.

"Jonk, or keerah luggarny wallie" (The woman with leeches).—Women with leeches attend to apply the required remedy, and are allowed to take away the leeches after they have done their office. These women by a particular pressure on the leech oblige it to disgorge the blood, when they immediately place it in fresh water; by this practice the leeches continue healthy, and may be brought to use again the following day if required.

"Kaan sarf kerna wallah" (Ear-cleaner).—The cleansing of ears is chiefly performed by men, who collecting this article make great profits from the sale of it, independent of the sums obtained from their employers. It is the chief ingredient in use for intoxicating elephants

previous to the furious contests so often described as the amusement of Native Courts.

"Goatah chandnie bickhow" (Sell your old silver trimmings).—The several articles of silver trimmings are invariably manufactured of the purest metal without any alloy, and when they have served their first purposes the old silver procures its weight in current rupees.

"Tale kee archah wallah" (Oil pickles).—The method of pickling in oil is of all others in most request with the common people, who eat the greasy substance as a relish to their bread and dhall. The mustard-oil used in the preparation of this dainty, is often preferred to ghee in curries.

The better sort of people prefer water pickle, which is made in most families during the hot and dry weather by a simple method; exposure to the sun being the chemical process to the parboiled carrots, turnips, radishes, &c., immersed in boiling water, with red pepper, green ginger, mustard-seed, and garlic. The flavour of this water pickle is superior to any other acid,

and possesses the property of purifying the blood.

"Mittie wallah" (Man with sweetmeats).—The many varieties of sweetmeats, or rather confectionary, in general estimation with the Natives, are chiefly composed of sugar and ghee, prepared in countless ways, with occasional additions of cocoa-nut, pistachias, cardimuns, rose-water, &c., and constantly hawked about the streets on trays by men.

"Kallonie wallah" (Man with toys).—Toys of every kind, of which no country in the world I suppose exhibits greater variety, in wood, lakh, uberuck (tulk), paper, bamboo, clay, &c., are constantly cried in the streets and roadways of a Native city.

"Punkah wallah" (Vender of fans).—The punkahs are of all description in general use, their shape and material varying with taste and circumstances, the general form resembling hand-screens: they are made for common use of date-leaf, platted as the common mats are; some are formed of a single leaf from the tor-

tree, large or small, the largest would cover a tolerable sized round table; many have painted figures and devices, and from their lightness may be waved by children without much labour. I have seen very pretty punkahs made of sweet-scented flowers over a frame of bamboo. This, however, is a temporary indulgence, as the flowers soon lose their fragrance.

"Turkaaree," "Mayvour" (The first is vegetables; the last, fruit).—Vegetables of every kind and many sorts of fruits are carried about by men and women, who describe the name and quality of the articles they have to sell. It would occupy too large a space to enumerate here the several productions, indigenous and foreign, of the vegetable world in India. The Natives in their cookery, use every kind of vegetable and fruit in its unripe state. Two pounds of meat is in general all that is required to form a meal for twenty people, and with this they will cook several dishes by addition of as many different sorts of vegetables.

Herbs, or green leaves, are always denominated saag, these are produced at all seasons of

the year, in many varieties; the more substantial vegetables, as potatoes, turnips, carrots, &c., are called turkaaree.

The red and green spinach is brought to the market throughout the year, and a rich-flavoured sorrel, so delicious in curries, is cultivated in most months. Green peas, or, indeed, vegetables in general, are never served in the plain way in which we see them at our tables, but always in stews or curries. The green mango is used invariably to flavour their several dishes, and, at the proper season, they are peeled, cut, and dried for the year's consumption. They dislike the acid of the lemon in their stews, which is never resorted to when the green mango or tamarind can be procured.

The fruits of India in general estimation with the Natives are the mango and the melon. Mangoes are luscious and enticing fruit; the Natives eat them to an excess when they have been some hours soaked in water, which, they say, takes away from the fruit its detrimental quality; without this preparatory precaution those who indulge in a feast of

mango are subject to fevers, and an increase of prickly heat, (a fiery irritable rash, which few persons are exempt from, more or less, in the hot weather); even biles, which equally prevail, are less troublesome to those persons who are careful only to eat mangoes that have been well soaked in water. The Natives have a practice, which is common among all classes, and therefore worthy the notice of foreigners, of drinking milk immediately after eating mangoes. It should be remembered that they never eat their fruit after dinner, nor do they at any time indulge in wine, spirits, or beer.

The mango in appearance and flavour has no resemblance to any of the fruits of England; they vary in weight from half an ounce to half a seer, nearly a pound; the skin is smooth, tough, and of the thickness of leather, strongly impregnated with a flavour of turpentine; the colour, when ripe, is grass green, or yellow in many shades, with occasioned tinges and streaks of bright red; the pulp is as juicy as our wall-fruit, and the kernel protected by a hard shell, to which fine strong silky fibres are firmly attached.

The kernel of the mango is of a hot and rather offensive flavour; the poor people, however, collect it, and when dried grind it into flour for bread, which is more wholesome than agreeable; in seasons of scarcity, however, it is a useful addition to the then scanty means of the lower orders of the people. The flavour of the fruit itself differs so much, that no description can be given of the taste of a mango—even the fruit of one tree vary in their flavour. A tope (orchard) of mango-trees is a little fortune to the possessor, and when in bloom a luxurious resort to the lovers of Nature.

The melon is cultivated in fields with great ease and little labour, due care being always taken to water the plants in their early growth. The varieties are countless, but the kind most esteemed, and known only in the Upper Provinces, are called chitlahs, from their being spotted green on a surface of bright yellow; the skin is smooth and of the thickness of that of an apple; the fruit weighing from half-a-pound to three pounds. The flavour may be compared to our finest peaches, partaking of the

same moist quality, and literally melting in the mouth.

The juice of the melon makes a delicious cider; I once tried the experiment with success. The Natives being prohibited from the use of all fermented liquors, I was induced by that consideration to be satisfied with the one experiment; but with persons who are differently situated the practice might be pursued with very little trouble, and a rich beverage produced, much more healthy than the usual arrack that is now distilled, to the deterioration of the health and morals of the several classes under the British rule, who are prone to indulge in the exhilarating draughts of fermented liquors.

At present my list of the indigenous vegetables of India must be short; so great, however, is the variety in Hindoostaun, both in their quality, and properties, and so many are the benefits derived from their several uses in this wonderful country, that at some future time I may be induced to follow, with humility, in the path trodden by the more scientific naturalists who have laboured to enrich the minds of mankind by their researches.

The Natives are herbalists in their medical practice. The properties of minerals are chiefly studied with the view to become the lucky discoverer of the means of transmuting metals; seldom with reference to their medicinal qualities. Quicksilver, however, in its unchanged state, is sometimes taken to renew the constitution. One gentleman, whom I well knew, commenced with a single grain, increasing the number progressively, until his daily dose was the contents of a large table-spoon; he certainly appeared to have benefited by the practice, for his appetite and spirits were those of a man at thirty, when he had counted eighty years.

"Muchullee" (Fish).—Fish of several kinds are caught in the rivers and tanks; the flavour I can hardly describe, for, since I knew the practice of the Hindoos of throwing their dead bodies into the rivers the idea of fish as an article of food was too revolting to my taste. The Natives, however, have none of these qualms; even the Hindoos enjoy a currie of fish as a real delicacy, although it may be

presumed some of their friends or neighbours have aided that identical fish in becoming a delicacy for the table.

There are some kinds of fish forbidden by the Mussulmaun law, which are, of course, never brought to their kitchens, as the eel, or any other fish having a smooth skin; all sorts of shell-fish are likewise prohibited by their code. Those fish which have scales are the only sort allowable to them for food.

The rooey is a large fish, and in Native families is much admired for its rich flavour; the size is about that of a salmon, the shape that of a carp; the flesh is white, and not unlike the silver mullet. The scales of this fish are extremely useful; which, on a tolerable sized fish, are in many parts as large as a crown-piece, and of a substance firmer than horn. It is not uncommon to see a suit of armour formed of these scales, which, they affirm, will turn the edge of the best metal, and from its lightness, compared with the chain armour, more advantageous to the wearer, though the appearance is not so agreeable to the eye.

"Chirryah wallah" (Bird-man).—The bird-

catcher cries his live birds fresh caught from the jungles: they seldom remain long on hand. I have before described the practice of letting off the birds, in cases of illness, as propitiatory sacrifices. The Natives take delight in petting talking-birds, minas and parrots particularly; and the bull-bull, the subzah, and many others for their sweet songs.

The numberless varieties of birds I have seen in India, together with their qualities, plumage, and habits would occupy too much of my time at present to describe. I will here only remark a few of the most singular as they appeared to me. The butcher-bird, so called from its habit, is known to live on seeds; yet it caters for the mina and others of the carniverous feathered family, by collecting grasshoppers, which they convey in the beak to the thorny bushes, and there fix them on sharp thorns, (some of which are nearly two inches in length), and would almost seem to have been formed by Nature for this use only. The mina follows his little friend's flight as if in the full assurance of the feast prepared for him.

The coel is a small black bird, of extreme

beauty in make and plumage; this bird's note is the harbinger of rain, and although one of the smallest of the feathered race, it is heard at a considerable distance. The coel's food is simply the suction from the petals of sweet-scented flowers.

The lollah, known to many by the name of haverdewatt, is a beautiful little creature, about one-third the size of a hedge-sparrow. The great novelty in this pretty bird is, that the spots of white on its brown plumage change to a deep red at the approach of the rainy season; the Natives keep them by dozens in cages with a religious veneration, as their single note describes one of the terms in use to express an attribute of the Almighty.

But enough—I must hasten to furnish my list of popular cries by the Indian pedlars, who roar out their merchandize and their calling to the inmates of dwellings bounded by high walls, whose principal views of the works of Nature and art are thus aided by these casual criers of the day.

"Artush-baajie" (Fireworks).—Fireworks are

considered here to be very well made, and the Native style much extolled by foreigners; every year they add some fresh novelty to their amusing pastime. They are hawked about at certain seasons, particularly at the Holie (a festival of the Hindoos,) and the Shubh-burraat of the Mussulmauns. Saltpetre being very reasonable, fireworks are sold for a small price. Most of the ingenious young men exercise their inventive powers to produce novelties in fireworks for any great season of rejoicing in their families.

"Chubbaynee" (Parched corn).—The corn of which we have occasionally specimens in English gardens, known generally by the name of Indian corn, is here used as a sort of intermediate meal, particularly amongst the labouring classes, who cook but once a day, and that when the day's toil is over. This corn is placed in a sort of furnace with sand, and kept constantly moved about. By this process it is rendered as white as magnesia, crisp, and of a sweet flavour; an hungry man could not eat more than half-a-pound of this corn

at once, yet it is not as nutritious as barley or wheat. I have never heard that the Natives use this corn for making bread.

"Tumaushbeen" (Wonder-workers). — This call announces the rope-dancers and sleight-of-hand company; eating fire, swallowing pen-knives, spinning coloured yarn through the nose, tricks with cups and balls, and all the arts of the well-known jugglers. I have seen both men and women attached to these travelling companies perform extraordinary feats of agility and skill, also most surprising vaultings, by the aid of bamboos, and a frightful method of whirling round on the top of a pole or mast. This pole is from twenty to thirty feet high; on the top is a swivel hook, which fastens to a loop in a small piece of wood tied fast to the middle of the performer, who climbs the pole without any assistance, and catches the hook to the loop; at first he swings himself round very gently, but increasing gradually in swiftness, until the velocity is equal to that of a wheel set in motion by steam. This feat is sometimes continued for ten or fifteen minutes

together, when his strength does not fail him; but it is too frightful a performance to give pleasure to a feeling audience.

"Samp-wallah" (Snake-catchers). — These men blow a shrill pipe in addition to calling out the honourable profession of snake-catcher. I fancy it is all pretence with these fellows; if they catch a snake on the premises, it is probably one they have let loose secretly, and which they have tutored to come and go at the signal given: they profess to draw snakes from their hiding-place, and make a good living by duping the credulous.

The best proof I can offer of the impositions practised by these men on the weakness and credulity of their neighbours, may be conveyed in the following anecdote, with which I have been favoured by a very intelligent Mussulmaun gentleman, on whom the cheat was attempted during my residence in his neighbourhood at Lucknow.

"Moonshie Sahib, as he is familiarly called by his friends, was absent from home on a certain day, during which period his wife and

family fancied they heard the frightful sound of a snake, apparently as if it was very near to them in the compound (court-yard) of the zeenahnah. They were too much alarmed to venture from the hall to the compound to satisfy themselves, or take steps to destroy the intruder if actually there. Whilst in this state of mental torture it happened (as they thought very fortunately) that a snake-catcher's shrill pipe was heard at no great distance, to whom a servant was sent; and when the ladies had shut themselves up securely in their purdahed apartment, the men servants were desired to introduce the samp-wallahs into the compound, to search for and secure this enemy to their repose.

"The snake-catcher made, to all appearance, a very minute scrutiny into every corner or aperture of the compound, as if in search of the reptile's retreat; and at last a moderate sized snake was seen moving across the open space in an opposite direction to the spot they were intent on examining. The greatest possible satisfaction was of course expressed

by the whole of the servants and slaves assembled; the lady of the house was more than gratified at the reported success of "the charmers," and sent proofs of her gratitude to the men in a sum of money, proportioned to her sense of the service rendered on the occasion; the head samp-wallah placed the snake in his basket, (they always carry a covered basket about with them) and they departed well satisfied with the profits of this day's employment.

"The Moonshie says, he returned home soon after, and listened to his wife's account of the events of the morning, and her warm commendation of the skilful samp-wallahs; but although the servants confirmed all the lady had told her husband of the snake-charmers' diligence, still he could not but believe that these idle fellows had practised an imposition on his unwary lady by their pretended powers in charming the snake. But here it rested for the time; he could not decide without an opportunity of witnessing the samp-wallahs at their employment, which he resolved to do the next convenient opportunity.

"As might have been anticipated, the very same snake-catcher and his attendant returned to the Moonshie's gateway a very few days after their former success; Moonshie Sahib was at home, and, concealing his real intentions, he gave orders that the two men should be admitted; on their entrance, he said to them, 'You say you can catch snakes; now, friends, if any of the same family remain of which you caught one the other day in this compound, I beg you will have the civility to draw them out from their hiding-places.' *

"The Moonshie watched the fellows narrowly, that they might not have a chance of escaping detection, if it was, as he had always suspected, that the snakes are first let loose by the men, who pretend to attract them from their hiding-places. The two men being bare-headed, and in a state of almost perfect nudity (the common usage of the very lowest class of Hindoo labourers), wearing only a small wrap-

* It is generally believed snakes do not live apart from their species; if one is destroyed in a house, a second is anticipated and generally discovered.

per which could not contain, he thought, the least of this class of reptiles, he felt certain there could not now be any deception.

"The samp-wallah and his assistant, pretending to search every hole and crevice of the compound, seemed busy and anxious in their employment, which occupied them for a long time without success. Tired at last with the labour, the men sat down on the ground to rest; the pipe was resorted to, with which they pretend to attract the snake; this was however sounded again and again without the desired effect.

"From the apparent impossibility of any cheat being practised on him, the Moonshie rather relaxed in his strict observance of the men: he had turned his back but for an instant only, when the two fellows burst out in an ecstasy of delight, exclaiming, 'They are come! they are come!'—and on the Moonshie turning quickly round, he was not a little staggered to find three small snakes on the ground, at no great distance from the men, who, he was convinced, had not moved from

the place. They seemed to have no dread of the reptiles, and accounted for it by saying they were invulnerable to the snakes' venom; the creatures were then fearlessly seized one by one by the men, and finally deposited in their basket.

"'They appear very tame,' thought the Moonshie, as he observed the men's actions: 'I am outwitted at last, I believe, with all my boasted vigilance; but I will yet endeavour to find them out.—Friend,' said he aloud, 'here is your reward,' holding the promised money towards the principal; 'take it, and away with you both; the snakes are mine, and I shall not allow you to remove them hence.'

"'Why, Sahib,' replied the man, 'what will you do with the creatures? they cannot be worth your keeping; besides, it is the dustoor (custom); we always have the snakes we catch for our perquisite.'—'It is of no consequence to you, friend, how I may dispose of the snakes,' said the Moonshie; 'I am to suppose they have been bred in my house, and having done no injury to my people, I may be allowed

to have respect for their forbearance; at any rate, I am not disposed to part with these guests, who could have injured me if they would.'

"The principal samp-wallah perceiving it was the Moonshie's intention to detain the snakes, in a perfect agony of distress for the loss he was likely to sustain, then commenced by expostulation, ending with threats and abuse, to induce the Moonshie to give them up; who, for his part, kept his temper within bounds, having resolved in his own mind, not to be outwitted a second time; the fellow's insolence and impertinent speeches were, therefore, neither chastised nor resented. The samp-wallah strove to wrest the basket from the Moonshie's strong grasp, without succeeding; and when he found his duplicity was so completely exposed, he altered his course, and commenced by entreaties and supplications, confessing at last, with all humility, that the reptiles were his own well-instructed snakes that he had let loose to catch again at pleasure. Then appealing to the Moonshie's well-known charitable

temper, besought him that the snakes might be restored, as by their aid he earned his precarious livelihood.

" ' That they are yours, I cannot doubt,' replied the Moonshie, ' and, therefore, my conscience will not allow me to detain them from you; but the promised reward I of course keep back. Your insolence and duplicity deserve chastisement, nevertheless I promise to forgive you, if you will explain to me how you managed to introduce these snakes.'

" The man, thankful that he should escape without further loss or punishment, showed the harmless snakes, which, it appears, had been deprived of their fangs and poison, and were so well instructed and docile, that they obeyed their keeper as readily as the best-tutored domestic animal. They coiled up their supple bodies into the smallest compass possible, and allowed their keeper to deposit them each in a separate bag of calico, which was fastened under his wrapper, where it would have been impossible, the Moonshie declares, for the quickest eye to discover that any thing was secreted."

"Sickley ghur" (Cutler and knife-grinder).—These most useful artisans are in great request, polishing articles of rusty steel, giving a new edge to the knives, scissors, razors, or swords of their employer, in a masterly manner, for a very small price.

"Dhie cuttie" (Sour curds).—This article is in great request by scientific cooks, who use it in many of their dainty dishes. The method of making sour curd is peculiarly Indian: it is made of good sweet milk, by some secret process which I could never acquire, and in a few hours the whole is coagulated to a curd of a sharp acidity, that renders it equally useful with other acids in flavouring their curries. The Natives use it with pepper, pounded green ginger, and the shreds of pumkins or radishes, as a relish to their savoury dishes, in lieu of chatnee; it is considered cooling in its quality, and delicious as an accompaniment to their favourite viands.

"Mallie" (Clotted cream).—This article is much esteemed by the Natives. I was anxious to know how clotted cream could be procured

at seasons when milk from the cow would be sour in a few hours, and am told that the milk when brought in fresh from the dairy is placed over the fire in large iron skillets; the skin (as we call it on boiled milk) is taken off with a skimmer, and placed in a basket, which allows all the milk to be drained from it; the skin again engendered on the surface is taken off in the same way, and so they continue, watching and skimming until the milk has nearly boiled away. This collection of skin is the clotted cream of Hindoostaun.

"Mukhun" (Butter).—Butter is very partially used by the Natives; they use ghee, which is a sort of clarified butter, chiefly produced from the buffalo's milk. The method of obtaining butter in India is singular to a European. The milk is made warm over the fire, then poured into a large earthen jar, and allowed to stand for a few hours. A piece of bamboo is split at the bottom, and four small pieces of wood inserted as stretchers to these splits. A leather strap is twisted over the middle of the bamboo, and the butter-maker with this keeps the bam-

boo in constant motion; the particles of butter swimming at the top are taken off and thrown into water, and the process of churning is resumed; this method continues until by the quantity collected, these nice judges have ascertained there is no more butter remaining in the milk. When the butter is to be sold, it is beaten up into round balls out of the water. When ghee is intended to be made, the butter is simmered over a slow fire for a given time, and poured into the ghee pot, which perhaps may contain the produce of the week before they convey it to the market for sale; in this state the greasy substance will keep good for months, but in its natural state, as butter, the second day it is offensive to have it in the room, much less to be used as an article of food.

"Burruff wallah" (The man with ice).—The ice is usually carried about in the evening, and considered a great indulgence by the Natives. The ice-men bring round both iced creams, and sherbet ices, in many varieties; some flavoured with oranges, pomegranates, pine-apple, rose-water, &c.

They can produce ices at any season, by saltpetre, which is here abundant and procured at a small price; but strange as it may appear, considering the climate, we have regular collections of ice made in January, in most of the stations in the Upper Provinces, generally under the superintendance of an English gentleman, who condescends to be the comptroller. The expenses are paid by subscribers, who, according to the value of their subscription, are entitled to a given quantity of ice, to be conveyed by each person's servant from the deposit an hour before day-break, in baskets made for the purpose well wadded with cotton and woollen blankets; conveyed home, the basket is placed where neither air or light can intrude. Zink bottles, filled with pure water, are placed round the ice in the basket, and the water is thus cooled for the day's supply, an indulgence of great value to the sojourners in the East.

The method of collecting ice is tedious and laborious, but where labour is cheap and the hands plenty the attempt has always been repaid by the advantages. As the sun declines,

the labourers commence their work; flat earthen platters are laid out, in exposed situations, in square departments, upon dried sugar-cane leaves very lightly spread, that the frosty air may pass inside the platters. A small quantity of water is poured into each platter; as fast as they freeze their contents are collected and conveyed during the night, to the pit prepared for the reception of ice. The rising sun disperses the labourers with the ice, and they seek their rest by day, and return again to their employ; as the lion, when the sun disappears, prowls out to seek his food from the bounty of his Creator. The hoar frost seldom commences until the first of January, and lasts throughout that month.

"Roshunie" (Ink).—Ink, that most useful auxiliary in rendering the thoughts of one mortal serviceable to his fellow-creatures through many ages, is here an article of very simple manufacture. The composition is prepared from lamp-black and gum-arabic; how it is made, I have yet to learn.

The ink of the Natives is not durable; with a

wet spunge may be erased the labour of a man's life. They have not yet acquired the art of printing, and as they still write with reeds, instead of feathers, an ink, permanent as our own, is neither agreeable or desirable.

There is one beautiful trait in the habits of the Mussulmaun: when about to write they not only make the prayer which precedes every important action of their lives, but they dedicate the writing to God, by a character on the first page, which, as in short-hand writing, implies the whole sentence. A man would be deemed heathenish amongst Mussulmauns, who by neglect or accident omitted this mark on whatever subject he is about to write.

Another of their habits is equally praiseworthy:—out of reverence for God's holy name (always expressed in their letters) written paper to be destroyed is first torn and then washed in water before the whole is scattered abroad; they would think it a sinful act to burn a piece of paper on which that Holy name has been inscribed. How often have I reflected whilst observing this praiseworthy feature in the cha-

racter of a comparatively unenlightened people, on the little respect paid to the sacred writings amongst a population who have had greater opportunities of acquiring wisdom and knowledge.

The culpable habit of chandlers in England is fresh in my memory, who without a scruple tear up Bibles and religious works to parcel out their pounds of butter and bacon, without a feeling of remorse on the sacrilege they have committed. How careless are children in their school-days of the sacred volume which contains the word of God to His creatures. Such improper uses, I might say abuses, of that Holy Book, would draw upon them the censure of a people who have not benefited by the contents, but who nevertheless respect the volume purely because it speaks the word "of that God whom they worship."

"Mayndhie" (A shrub).—The mayndhie and its uses have been so fully explained in the letters on Mahurrum, that I shall here merely remark, that the shrub is of quick growth, nearly resembling the small-leafed myrtle; the Natives

make hedge-rows of it, in their grounds, the blossom is very simple, and the shrub itself hardy: the dye is permanent.

"Sulmah."—A prepared permanent black dye, from antimony. This is used with hair-pencils to the circle of the eye at the root of the eye-lashes by the Native ladies and often by gentlemen, and is deemed both of service to the sight and an ornament to the person. It certainly gives the appearance of large eyes, if there can be any beauty in altering the natural countenance, which is an absurd idea, in my opinion. Nature is perfect in all her works; and whatever best accords with each feature of a countenance I think she best determines; I am sure that no attempt to disguise or alter Nature in the human face ever yet succeeded, independent of the presumption in venturing to improve that which in His wisdom, the Creator has deemed sufficient.

It would occupy my pages beyond the limits I can conveniently spare to the subject, were I to pursue remarks on the popular cries of a Native city to their fullest extent; scarcely

any article that is vended at the bazaars, but is also hawked about the streets. This is a measure of necessity growing out of the state of Mussulmaun society, by which the females are enabled to purchase at their own doors all that can be absolutely requisite for domestic purposes, without the obligation of sending to the markets or the shops, when either not convenient, or not agreeable. And the better to aid both purchasers and venders, these hawkers pronounce their several articles for sale, with voices that cannot fail to impress the inhabitants enclosed within high walls, with a full knowledge of the articles proclaimed without need of interpreters.

LETTER XVII.

Seclusion of Females.—Paadshah Begum.—The Suwaarree.—Female Bearers.—Eunuchs.—Rutts.—Partiality of the Ladies to large retinues.—Female Companions.—Telling the Khaunie.—Games of the Zeenahnah.—Shampooing.—The Punkah.—Slaves and slavery.—Anecdote.—The Persian Poets.—Fierdowsee.—Saadie, his "Goolistaun."—Haafiz.—Mahumud Baarkur.—"Hyaatool Kaaloob."—Different manner of pronouncing Scripture names.

THE strict seclusion which forms so conspicuous a feature in the female society of the Mussulmauns in India, renders the temporary migration of ladies from their domicile an event of great interest to each individual of the zeenahnah whether the mistress or her many dependents be considered.

The superior classes seldom quit their habitation but on the most important occasions; they, therefore, make it a matter of necessity to move

out in such style as is most likely to proclaim their exalted station in life. I cannot, perhaps, explain this part of my subject better than by giving a brief description of the suwaarree (travelling retinue) of the Paadshah Begum, which passed my house at Lucknow on the occasion of her visit to the Durgah of Huzerut Abas Ali Kee, after several years strictly confining herself to the palace.

By Paadshah is meant "King;"—Begum, "Lady." The first wife of the King is distinguished by this title from every other he may have married; it is equivalent to that of "Queen" in other countries. With this title the Paadshah Begum enjoys also many other marks of royal distinction; as, for instance, the dunkhah (kettle-drums) preceding her suwaarree; a privilege, I believe, never allowed by the King to any other female of his family. The embroidered chattah (umbrella); the afthaadah (embroidered sun); and chowries of the peacock's feathers, are also out-of-door distinctions allowed only to this lady and the members of the royal family. But to my description:—

First, in the Paadshah Begum's suwaarree I observed a guard of cavalry soldiers in full dress, with their colours unfurled; these were followed by two battalions of infantry, with their bands of music and colours. A company of spearmen on foot, in neat white dresses and turbans, their spears of silver, rich and massive. Thirty-six men in white dresses and turbans, each having a small triangular flag of crimson silk, on which were embroidered the royal arms, (two fish and a dirk of a peculiar shape). The staffs of these flags are of silver, about three feet long; in the lower part of the handle a small bayonet is secreted, which can be produced at will by pressure on a secret spring. Next followed a full band of music, drums, fifes, &c.; then the important dunkah, which announces to the public the lady's rank: she is enclosed within the elevated towering chundole, on each side of which the afthaadah and chowries are carried by well-dressed men, generally confidential servants, appointed to this service.

The chundole is a conveyance resembling a palankeen, but much larger and more lofty; it

is, in fact, a small silver room, six feet long, five broad, and four feet high, supported by the aid of four silver poles on the shoulders of twenty bearers. These bearers are relieved every quarter of a mile by a second set in attendance: the two sets change alternately to the end of the journey. The bearers are dressed in a handsome royal livery of white calico made to sit close to the person; over which are worn scarlet loose coats of fine English broad-cloth, edged and bordered with gold embroidery: on the back of the coat a fish is embroidered in gold. Their turbans correspond in colour with the coats; on the front of the turban is fixed diagonally a fish of wrought gold, to the tail of which a rich gold tassel is attached; this reaches to the shoulder of the bearer, and gives a remarkable air of grandeur to the person.

The chundole is surrounded by very powerful women bearers, whose business it is to convey the vehicle within the compound (court-yard) of the private apartments, or wherever men are not admitted at the same time with females. Chobdhaars and soota-badhaars walk near the

chundole carrying gold and silver staffs or wands, and vociferating the rank and honours of the lady they attend with loud voices the whole way to and from the Durgah. These men likewise keep off the crowds of beggars attracted on such occasions by the known liberality of the ladies, who, according to established custom, make distributions to a large amount, which are scattered amongst the populace by several of the Queen's eunuchs, who walk near the chundole for that purpose.

The chief of the eunuchs followed the Queen's chundole on an elephant, seated in a gold howdah; the trappings of which were of velvet, richly embroidered in gold; the eunuch very elegantly dressed in a suit of gold-cloth, a brilliant turban, and attired in expensive shawls. After the eunuch, follow the Paadshah Begum's ladies of quality, in covered palankeens, each taking precedence according to the station or the favour she may enjoy; they are well guarded by soldiers, spearmen, and chobdhaars. Next in the train, follow the several officers of the Queen's household, on

elephants, richly caparisoned. And, lastly, the women of inferior rank and female slaves, in rutts (covered carriages) such as are in general use throughout India. These rutts are drawn by bullocks, having bells of a small size strung round their neck, which as they move have a novel and not unpleasing sound, from the variety of tones produced. The rutt is a broad-wheeled carriage, the body and roof forming two cones, one smaller than the other, covered with scarlet cloth, edged, fringed, and bordered with gold or amber silk trimmings. The persons riding in rutts are seated on cushions placed flat on the surface of the carriage (the Asiatic style of sitting at all times) and not on raised seats, the usual custom in Europe. The entrance to these rutts is from the front, like the tilted carts of England, where a thick curtain of corresponding colour and material conceals the inmates from the public gaze; a small space is left between this curtain and the driver, where one or two women servants are seated as guards, who are privileged by age and ugliness to indulge in the liberty of seeing

the passing gaiety, and of enjoying, without a screen, the pure air; benefits which their superiors in rank are excluded from at all ages.

In the Paadshah Begum's suwaarree, I counted fifty of these Native carriages, into each of which from four to six females are usually crowded, comprising the members of the household establishment of the great lady; such as companions, readers of the Khoraun, kaawauses (the higher classes of female-slaves) muggalanie (needle-women), &c. This will give you a tolerable idea of the number and variety of females attached to the suite of a lady of consequence in India. The procession, at a walking pace, occupied nearly half an hour in passing the road opposite to my house: it was well conducted, and the effect imposing, both from its novelty and splendour.

A lady here would be the most unhappy creature existing, unless surrounded by a multitude of attendants suitable to her rank in life. They have often expressed surprise and astonishment at my want of taste in keeping only two women servants in my employ, and having

neither a companion nor a slave in my whole establishment; they cannot imagine any thing so stupid as my preference to a quiet study, rather than the constant bustle of a well-filled zeenahnah.

Many of the Mussulmaun ladies entertain women companions, whose chief business is to tell stories and fables to their employer, while she is composing herself to sleep; many of their tales partake of the romantic cast which characterizes the well-remembered "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," one story begetting another to the end of the collection. When the lady is fairly asleep the story is stayed, and the companion resumes her employment when the next nap is sought by her mistress.

Amongst the higher classes the males also indulge in the same practice of being talked to sleep by their men slaves; and it is a certain introduction with either sex to the favour of their employer, when one of these dependants has acquired the happy art of "telling the khaunie" (fable), with an agreeable voice and manner. The more they embellish a tale by

flights of their versatile imaginations, so much greater the merit of the rehearser in the opinion of the listeners.

The inmates of zeenahnahs occasionally indulge in games of chance: their dice are called chowsah (four sides), or chuhsah (six sides); these dice are about four inches long and half an inch thick on every side, numbered much in the same way as the European dice. They are thrown by the hand, not from boxes, and fall lengthways.

They have many different games which I never learned, disliking such modes of trifling away valuable time; I am not, therefore, prepared to describe them accurately. One of their games has a resemblance to draughts, and is played on a chequered cloth carpet, with red and white ivory cones. They have also circular cards, six suits to a pack, very neatly painted, with which they play many (to me) indescribable games; but oftener, to their credit be it said, for amusement than for gain. The gentlemen, however, are not always equally disinterested; they frequently play for large

sums of money. I do not, however, find the habit so general with the Natives as it is with Europeans. The religious community deem all games of chance unholy, and therefore incompatible with their mode of living. I am not aware that gaming is prohibited by their law in a direct way, but all practices tending to covetousness are strictly forbidden; and, surely, those who can touch the money called "winnings," at any game, must be more or less exposed to the accusation of desiring other men's goods.

Shampooing has been so often described as to leave little by way of novelty for me to remark on the subject; it is a general indulgence with all classes, in India whatever may be their age or circumstances. The comfort derived from the pressure of the hands on the limbs, by a clever shampooer, is alone to be estimated by those who have experienced the benefits derived from this luxurious habit, in a climate where such indulgences are needed to assist in creating a free circulation of the blood, which is very seldom induced by exer-

cise as in more Northern latitudes. Persons of rank are shampooed by their slaves during the hours of sleep, whether it be by day or by night; and if through any accidental circumstance the pressure is discontinued, even for a few seconds only, the sleep is immediately broken: such is the power of habit.

The punkah (fan) is in constant use by day and night, during eight months of the year. In the houses of the Natives, the slaves have ample employment in administering to the several indulgences which their ladies require at their hands; for with them fixed punkahs have not been introduced into the zeenahnah: the only punkah in their apartments is moved by the hand, immediately over or in front of the person for whose use it is designed. In the gentlemen's apartments, however, and in the houses of all Europeans, punkahs are suspended from the ceiling, to which a rope is fastened and passed through an aperture in the wall into the verandah, where a man is seated who keeps it constantly waving, by pulling the rope, so that the

largest rooms, and even churches, are filled with wind, to the great comfort of all present.

The female slaves, although constantly required about the lady's person, are nevertheless tenderly treated, and have every proper indulgence afforded them. They discharge in rotation the required duties of their stations, and appear as much the objects of the lady's care as any other people in her establishment. Slavery with them is without severity; and in the existing state of Mussulmaun society, they declare the women slaves to be necessary appendages to their rank and respectability. The liberal proprietors of slaves give them suitable matches in marriage when they have arrived at a proper age, and even foster their children with the greatest care; often granting them a salary, and sometimes their freedom, if required to make them happy. Indeed, generally speaking the slaves in a Mussulmaun's house must be vicious and unworthy, who are not considered members of the family.

It is an indisputable fact that the welfare of

their slaves is an object of unceasing interest with their owners, if they are really good Mussulmauns; indeed, it is second only to the regard which they manifest to their own children.

Many persons have been known, in making their will, to decree the liberty of their slaves, They are not, however, always willing to accept the boon. "To whom shall I go?"—"Where shall I meet a home like my master's house?" are appeals that endear the slave to the survivors of the first proprietor, and proves that their bondage has not been a very painful one. It is an amiable trait of character amongst the Mussulmauns, with whom I have been intimate, and which I can never forget, that the dependence of their slaves is made easy; that they enjoy every comfort compatible with their station; and that their health, morals, clothing, and general happiness, are as much attended to as that of their own relatives. But slavery is a harsh term between man and man, and however mitigated its state, is still degrading to him. I heartily trust there will be a time when this badge of

disgrace shall be wiped away from every human being. He that made man, designed him for higher purposes than to be the slave of his fellow-mortal; but I should be unjust to the people of India, if I did not remark, that having the uncontrolled power in their hands, they abstain from the exercise of any such severity as has disgraced the owners of slaves in other places, where even the laws have failed to protect them from cruelty and oppression. Indeed, wherever an instance has occurred of unfeeling conduct towards these helpless beings, the most marked detestation has invariably been evinced towards the authors by the real Mussulmaun.

I have heard of a very beautiful female slave who had been fostered by a Native lady of high rank, from her infancy. In the course of time, this female slave had arrived to the honour of being made the companion of her young master, still however, by her Begum's consent, residing with her lady, who was much attached to her. The freedom of intercourse, occasioned by the slave's exaltation, had the effect of lessening the

young creature's former respect for her still kind mistress, to whom she evinced some ungrateful returns for the many indulgences she had through life received at her hands. The exact nature of her offences I never heard, but it was deemed requisite, for the sake of example in a house where some hundreds of female slaves were maintained, that the lady should adopt some such method of testifying her displeasure towards this pretty favourite, as would be consistent with her present elevated station. A stout silver chain was therefore made, by the Begum's orders, and with this the slave was linked to her bedstead a certain number of hours every day, in the view of the whole congregated family of slaves. This punishment would be felt as a degradation by the slave; not the confinement to her bedstead, where she would perhaps have seated herself from choice, had she not been in disgrace.

"Once a slave, and always a slave," says Fierdowsee the great poet of Persia; but this apophthegm was in allusion to the "mean mind"

of the King who treated him scurvily after his immense labour in that noble work, "The Shah Namah." I have a sketch of Fierdowsee's life, which my husband translated for me; but I must forbear giving it here, as I have heard the whole work itself is undergoing a translation by an able Oriental scholar, who will doubtless do justice both to "The Shah Namah" and the character of Fierdowsee, who is in so great estimation with the learned Asiatics.

The Mussulmauns quote their favourite poets with much the same freedom that the more enlightened nations are wont to use with their famed authors. The moral precepts of Saadie are often introduced with good effect, both in writing and speaking, as beacons to the inexperienced.

Haafiz has benefited the Mussulmaun world by bright effusions of genius, which speak to successive generations the wonders of his extraordinary mind. He was a poet of great merit; his style is esteemed superior to the writers of any other age; and, notwithstand-

ing the world is rich with the beauties of his almost inspired mind, yet, strange as it may appear, he never compiled a single volume. Even in the age in which he lived his merit as a poet was in great estimation; but he never thought of either benefit or amusement to the world or to himself beyond the present time. He wrote the thoughts of his inspired moments on pieces of broken pitchers or pans, with charcoal; some of his admirers were sure to follow his footsteps narrowly, and to their vigilance in securing those scraps strewed about, wherever Haafiz had made his sojourn, may to this day be ascribed the benefit derived by the public from his superior writings. Saadie, however, is the standard favourite of all good Mussulmauns; his "Goolistaun" (Garden of Roses), is placed in the hands of every youth when consigned to the dominion of a master, as being the most worthy book in the Persian language for his study, whether the beauty of his diction, or the morality of his subjects be considered.

The "Hyaatool Kaaloob" (Enlightener of the Heart), is another Persian work, in prose, by

Mirza Mahumud Baakur, greatly esteemed by the learned Mussulmauns. This work contains the life and acts of every known prophet from the Creation, including also Mahumud and the twelve Emaums. The learned Maulvee, it appears, first wrote it in the Arabic language, but afterwards translated it into Persian, with the praiseworthy motive of rendering his invaluable work available to those Mussulmauns who were not acquainted with Arabic.

I have some extracts from this voluminous work, translated for me by my husband, which interested me on account of the great similarity to our Scripture history; and if permitted at some future time, I propose offering them to the public in our own language, conceiving they may be as interesting to others as they have been to me.

The Persian and Arabic authors, I have remarked, substitute Y for J in Scripture names; for instance, Jacob and Joseph are pronounced Yaaçoob and Yeusuf. They also differ from us in some names commencing with A, as in Abba, which they pronounce Ubba (Father);

for Amen, they say Aameen, (the meaning strictly coinciding with ours); for Aaron, Aaroon; for Moses, Moosa. I am told by those who are intimate with both languages, that there is a great similarity between the Hebrew and Arabic. The passage in our Scripture "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani," was interpreted to me by an Arabic scholar, as it is rendered in that well-remembered verse in the English translation.

LETTER XVIII.

Evils attending a residence in India.—Frogs.—Flies.—Blains.—Musquitoes.—The White Ant.—The Red Ant.—Their destructive habits.—A Tarantula.—Black Ants.—Locusts.—Superstition of the Natives upon their appearance.—The Tufaun, or Haundhie (tempest).—The rainy season.—Thunder and lightning.—Meteors.—Earthquakes.—A city ruined by them.—Reverence of the Mussulmauns for saints.—Prickly heat.—Cholera Morbus.—Mode of Treatment.—Temperance the best remedy.—Recipe.

A RESIDENCE in India, productive as it may be (to many) of pecuniary benefits, presents, however, a few inconveniences to Europeans independent of climate,—which, in the absence of more severe trials, frequently become a source of disquiet, until habit has reconciled, or reflection disposed the mind to receive the mixture of evil and good which is the common lot

of man in every situation of life. I might moralize on the duty of intelligent beings suffering patiently those trials which human ingenuity cannot avert, even if this world's happiness were the only advantage to be gained; but when we reflect on the account we have to give hereafter, for every thought, word, or action, I am induced to believe, the well-regulated mind must view with dismay a retrospect of the past murmurings of which it has been guilty. But I must bring to view the trials of patience which our countrymen meet with in India, to those who have neither witnessed nor endured them; many of them present slight, but living, copies of those evils with which the Egyptians were visited for their impiety to Heaven.

Frogs, for instance, harmless as these creatures are in their nature, occasion no slight inconvenience to the inhabitants of India. They enter their house in great numbers, and, without much care, would make their way to the beds, as they do to the chambers; their croaking during the rainy season is almost deafening, particularly towards the evening and during the

night. Before the morning has well dawned, these creatures creep into every open door-way, and throughout the day secrete themselves under the edges of mattings and carpets, to the annoyance of those who have an antipathy to these unsightly looking creatures.

The myriads of flies which fill the rooms, and try the patience of every observer of nice order in an English establishment, may bear some likeness to the plague which was inflicted on Pharaoh and his people, as a punishment for their hardness of heart. The flies of India have a property not common to those of Europe, but very similar to the green fly of Spain: when bruised, they will raise a blister on the skin, and, I am told, are frequently made use of by medical gentlemen as a substitute for the Spanish fly.

If but one wing or leg of a fly is by any accident dropped into the food of an individual, and swallowed, the consequence is an immediate irritation of the stomach, answering the purpose of a powerful emetic. At meals the flies are a pest, which most people say they

abhor, knowing the consequences of an unlucky admission into the stomach of the smallest particle of the insect. Their numbers exceed all calculation; the table is actually darkened by the myriads, particularly in the season of the periodical rains. The Natives of India use muslin curtains suspended from the ceiling of their hall at meal times, which are made very full and long, so as to enclose the whole dinner party and exclude their tormentors.

The biles or blains, which all classes of people in India are subject to, may be counted as amongst the catalogue of Pharaoh's plagues. The most healthy and the most delicate, whether Europeans or Natives, are equally liable to be visited by these eruptions, which are of a painful and tedious nature. The causes inducing these biles no one, as yet, I believe, has been able to discover, and therefore a preventative has not been found. I have known people who have suffered every year from these attacks, with scarce a day's intermission during the hot weather.

The musquitoes, a species of gnat, tries the

patience of the public in no very measured degree; their malignant sting is painful, and their attacks incessant; against which there is no remedy but patience, and a good gauze curtain to the beds. Without some such barrier, foreigners could hardly exist; certainly they never could enjoy a night's repose. Even the mere buzzing of musquitoes is a source of much annoyance to Europeans: I have heard many declare the bite was not half so distressing as the sound. The Natives, both male and female, habitually wrap themselves up so entirely in their chuddah (sheet) that they escape from these voracious insects, whose sounds are so familiar to them that it may be presumed they lull to, rather than disturb their sleep.

The white ant is a cruel destroyer of goods: where it has once made its domicile, a real misfortune may be considered to have visited the house. They are the most destructive little insects in the world, doing as much injury in one hour, as a man might labour through a long life to redeem. These ants, it would seem, have no small share of animosity to ladies' finery,

for many a wardrobe have they demolished, well filled with valuable dresses and millinery before their vicinity has even been suspected, or their traces discovered. They destroy beams in the roofs of houses, chests of valuable papers, carpets, mats, and furniture, with a dispatch which renders them the most formidable of enemies, although to appearance but a mean little insect.

There is one season of the year when they take flight, having four beautiful transparent wings; this occurs during the periodical rains, when they are attracted by the lights of the houses, which they enter in countless numbers filling the tables, and whilst flitting before the lights disencumber themselves of their wings. They then become, to appearance, a fat maggot, and make their way to the floors and walls, where it is supposed they secrete themselves for a season, and are increasing in numbers whilst in this stage of existence. At the period of their migration in search of food, they will devour any perishable materials within their reach. It is probable, however, that they first

send out scouts to discover food for the family, for the traces of white ants are discovered by a sort of clay-covered passage, formed as they proceed on their march in almost a direct line, which often extends a great distance from their nest.

To mark the economy of ants has sometimes formed a part of my amusements in Hindoostaun. I find they all have wings at certain seasons of the year; and more industrious little creatures cannot exist than the small red ants, which are so abundant in India. I have watched them at their labours for hours without tiring; they are so small that from eight to twelve in number labour with great difficulty to convey a grain of wheat or barley; yet these are not more than half the size of a grain of English wheat. I have known them to carry one of these grains to their nest at a distance of from six hundred to a thousand yards; they travel in two distinct lines over rough or smooth ground, as it may happen, even up and down steps, at one regular pace. The returning unladen ants invariably salute the burthened ones, who are

making their way to the general storehouse; but it is done so promptly, that the line is neither broken nor their progress impeded by the salutation.

I was surprised one morning in my breakfast parlour to discover something moving slowly up the wall; on approaching near to examine what it was, I discovered a dead wasp, which the khidmutghar (footman), had destroyed with his chowrie during breakfast, and which, falling on the floor, had become the prize of my little friends, (a vast multitude), who were labouring with their tiny strength to convey it to their nest in the ceiling. The weight was either too great, or they had quarrelled over the burthen, —I know not which,—but the wasp fell to the ground when they had made more than half the journey of the wall; the courageous little creatures, however, were nothing daunted, they resumed their labour, and before evening their prize was safely housed.

These ants are particularly fond of animal food. I once caught a tarantula; it was evening, and I wished to examine it by daylight. I placed it for this purpose in a recess of the

wall, under a tumbler, leaving just breathing room. In the morning I went to examine my curiosity, when to my surprise it was dead and swarming with red ants, who had been its destroyers, and were busily engaged in making a feast on the (to them) huge carcass of the tarantula.

These small creatures often prove a great annoyance by their nocturnal visits to the beds of individuals, unless the precaution be taken of having brass vessels, filled with water, to each of the bed-feet; the only method of effectually preventing their approach to the beds. I was once much annoyed by a visit from these bold insects, when reclining on a couch during the extreme heat of the day. I awoke by an uneasy sensation from their bite or sting about my ears and face, and found they had assembled by millions on my head; the bath was my immediate resource. The Natives tell me these little pests will feed on the human body if they are not disturbed: when any one is sick there is always great anxiety to keep them away.

The large black ant is also an enemy to man;

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its sharp pincers inflict wounds of no trifling consequence; it is much larger than the common fly, has long legs, is swift of foot, and feeds chiefly on animal substances. I fancy all the ant species are more or less carnivorous, but strictly epicurean in their choice of food, avoiding tainted or decomposed substances, with the nicest discrimination. Sweatmeats are alluring to them; there is also some difficulty in keeping them from jars of sugar or preserves; and when swallowed in food, are the cause of much personal inconvenience.

I have often witnessed the Hindoos, male and female, depositing small portions of sugar near ants' nests, as acts of charity to commence the day with; and it is the common opinion with the Natives generally, that wherever the red ants colonize prosperity attends the owners of that house. They destroy the white ants, though the difference in their size is as a grain of sand to a barley-corn; and on that account only may be viewed rather as friends than enemies to man, provided by the same Divine source from whence all other benefits proceed.

The locusts, so familiar by name to the readers of Scripture, are here seen to advantage in their occasional visits. I had, however, been some years in India before I was gratified by the sight of these wonderful insects; not because of their rarity, as I had frequently heard of their appearance and ravages, but not immediately in the place where I was residing, until the year 1825, which the following memorandum made at the time will describe.

On the third of July, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, I observed a dusky brown cloud bordering the Eastern horizon, at the distance of about four miles from my house, which stands on an elevated situation; the colour was so unusual that I resolved on inquiring from my oracle, Meer Hadjee Shaah, to whom I generally applied for elucidations of the remarkable, what such an appearance portended? He informed me it was a flight of locusts.

I had long felt anxious to witness those insects, that had been the food of St. John in the Desert, and which are so familiar by name from

their frequent mention in Scripture; and now that I was about to be gratified, I am not ashamed to confess my heart bounded with delight, yet with an occasional feeling of sympathy for the poor people, whose property would probably become the prey of this devouring cloud of insects before the morning's dawn. Long before they had time to advance, I was seated in an open space in the shade of my house to watch them more minutely. The first sound I could distinguish was as the gentlest breeze, increasing as the living cloud approached; and as they moved over my head, the sound was like the rustling of the wind through the foliage of many pepul-trees.

It was with a feeling of gratitude that I mentally thanked God at the time that they were a stingless body of insects, and that I could look on them without the slightest apprehension of injury. Had this wonderous cloud of insects been the promised locust described in the Apocalypse, which shall follow the fifth angel's trumpet; had they been hornets, wasps, or even the little venomous musquito, I had not then dared to retain

my position to watch with eager eyes the progress of this insect family as they advanced, spreading for miles on every side with something approaching the sublime, and presenting a most imposing spectacle. So steady and orderly was their pace, having neither confusion nor disorder in their line of march through the air, that I could not help comparing them to the well-trained horses of the English cavalry.* "Who gave them this order in their flight?" was in my heart and on my tongue.

I think the main body of this army of locusts must have occupied thirty minutes in passing over my head, but my attention was too deeply engrossed to afford me time to consult my time-piece. Stragglers there were many, separated from the flight by the noises made by the servants and people to deter them from settling; some were caught, and, no doubt, converted into currie for a Mussulmaun's meal. They say it is no common delicacy, and is ranked among the allowed animal food.

* An esteemed friend has since referred me to the second chapter of the prophet Joel, part of the seventh and eighth verses, as a better comparison.

The Natives anticipate earthquakes after the visitation or appearance of locusts. They are said to generate in mountains, but I cannot find any one here able to give me an authentic account of their natural history.

On the 18th of September, 1825, another flight of these wonderful insects passed over my house in exactly a contrary direction from those which appeared in July, viz. from the West towards the East. The idea struck me that they might be the same swarm, returning after fulfilling the object of their visit to the East: but I have no authority on which to ground my supposition. The Natives have never made natural history even an amusement, much less a study, although their habits are purely those of Nature; they know the property of most herbs, roots, and flowers, which they cultivate, not for their beauty, but for the benefit they render to man and beast.

I could not learn that the flight had rested anywhere near Futtyghur, at which place I was then living. They are of all creatures the most destructive to vegetation, licking with their rough

tongue the blades of grass, the leaves of trees, and green herbage of all kinds. Wherever they settle for the night, vegetation is completely destroyed; and a day of mournful consequences is sure to follow their appearance in the poor farmer's fields of green corn.

But that which bears the most awful resemblance to the visitations of God's wrath on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, is, I think, the frightful storm of wind which brings thick darkness over the earth at noonday, and which often occurs from the Tufaun or Haundhie, as it is called by the Natives. Its approach is first discerned by dark columns of yellow clouds, bordering the horizon; the alarm is instantly given by the Natives who hasten to put out the fires in the kitchens, and close the doors and windows in European houses, or with the Natives to let down the purdahs. No sound that can be conceived by persons who have not witnessed this phenomenon of Nature, is capable of conveying an idea of the tempest. In a few minutes total darkness is produced by the thick cloud of dust; and the tremendous rushing wind

carries the fine sand, which produces the darkness, through every cranny and crevice to all parts of the house; so that in the best secured rooms, every article of furniture is covered with sand, and the room filled as with a dense fog: the person, dresses, furniture, and the food (if at meal times), are all of one dusky colour; and though candles are lighted to lessen the horror of the darkness, they only tend to make the scene of confusion more visible.

Fortunately the tempest is not of very long continuance. I have never known it to last more than half-an-hour; yet in that time how much might have been destroyed of life and property, but for the interposing care of Divine mercy, whose gracious Providence over the works of His hand is seen in such seasons as these! The sound of thunder is hailed as a messenger of peace; the Natives are then aware that the fury of the tempest is spent, as a few drops of rain indicate a speedy termination; and when it has subsided they run to see what damage has been done to the premises without. It often occurs, that trees are torn up by their

roots, the thatched houses and huts unroofed, and, if due care has not been taken to quench the fires in time, huts and bungalows are frequently found burnt, by the sparks conveyed in the dense clouds of sand which pass with the rapidity of lightning.

These tufauns occur generally in April, May, and June, before the commencement of the periodical rains. I shall never forget the awe I felt upon witnessing the first after my arrival, nor the gratitude which filled my heart when the light reappeared. The Natives on such occasions gave me a bright example: they ceased not in the hour of peril to call on God for safety and protection; and when refreshed by the return of calm, they forgot not that their helper was the merciful Being in whom they had trusted, and to whom they gave praise and thanksgiving.

The rainy season is at first hailed with a delight not easily to be explained. The long continuance of the hot winds,—during which period (three months or more) the sky is of the colour of copper, without the shadow of a

cloud to shield the earth from the fiery heat of the sun, which has, in that time, scorched the earth, and its inhabitants, stinted vegetation, and even affected the very houses—renders the season when the clouds pour out their welcome moisture a period which is looked forward to with anxiety, and received with universal joy.

The smell of the earth after the first shower, is more dearly loved than the finest aromatics or the purest otta. Vegetation revives and human nature exults in the favourable shower. As long as the novelty lasts, and the benefit is sensibly felt, all seem to rejoice; but when the intervals of clouds without rain occur, and send forth as they separate, the bright glare untempered by a passing breeze, poor weak human nature is too apt to revolt against the season they cannot control, and sometimes a murmuring voice is heard to cry out, "Oh, when will the rainy season end!"

The thunder and lightning during the rainy season are beyond my ability to describe. The loud peals of thunder roll for several minutes in succession, magnificently, awfully

grand. The lightning is proportionably vivid, yet with fewer instances of conveying the electric fluid to houses than might be expected when the combustible nature of the roofs is considered; the chief of which are thatched with coarse dry grass. The casualities are by no means frequent; and although trees surround most of the dwellings, yet we seldom hear of any injury by lightning befalling them or their habitations. Fiery meteors frequently fall; one within my recollection was a superb phenomenon, and was visible for several seconds.

The shocks from earthquakes are frequently felt in the Upper Provinces of India; I was sensible of the motion on one occasion, (rather a severe one), for at least twenty seconds. The effect on me, however, was attended with no inconvenience beyond a sensation of giddiness, as if on board ship in a calm, when the vessel rolls from side to side.

At Kannoge, now little more than a village in population, between Cawnpore and Futtyghur, I have rambled amongst the ruins of what formerly was an immense city, but which was

overturned by an earthquake some centuries past. At the present period numerous relics of antiquity, as coins, jewels, &c., are occasionally discovered, particularly after the rains, when the torrents break down fragments of the ruins, and carry with the streams of water the long-buried mementos of the riches of former generations to the profit of the researching villagers, and to the gratification of curious travellers, who generally prove willing purchasers.

I propose giving in another letter the remarks I was led to make on Kannoge during my pleasant sojourn in that retired situation, as it possesses many singular antiquities and contains the ashes of many holy Mussulmaun saints. The Mussulmauns, I may here observe, reverence the memory of the good and the pious of all persuasions, but more particularly those of their own faith. I have sketches of the lives and actions of many of their sainted characters, received through the medium of my husband and his most amiable father, that are both amusing and instructive; and notwithstanding their particular faith be not in accordance with

our own, it is only an act of justice to admit, that they were men who lived in the fear of God, and obeyed his commandments according to the instruction they had received; and which, I hope, may prove agreeable to my readers when they come to those pages I have set apart for such articles.

My catalogue of the trying circumstances attached to the comforts which are to be met with in India are nearly brought to a close; but I must not omit mentioning "one blessing in disguise" which occurs annually, and which affects Natives and Europeans indiscriminately, during the hot winds and the rainy season: the name of this common visitor is, by Europeans, called "the prickly heat;" by Natives it is denominated "Gurhum dahnie" (warm rash). It is a painful irritating rash, often spreading over the whole body, mostly prevailing, however, wherever the clothes screen the body from the power of the air; we rarely find it on the hands or face. I suppose it to be induced by excessive perspiration, more particularly as those persons who are deficient in this freedom

of the pores, so essential to healthiness, are not liable to be distressed by the rash; but then they suffer more severely in their constitution by many other painful attacks of fever, &c. So greatly is this rash esteemed the harbinger of good health, that they say in India, "the person so afflicted has received his life-lease for the year;" and wherever it does not make its appearance, a sort of apprehension is entertained of some latent illness.

Children suffer exceedingly from the irritation, which to scratch is dangerous. In Native nurseries I have seen applications used of pounded sandal-wood, camphor, and rose-water; with the peasantry a cooling earth, called mooltanie mittee, similar to our fuller's-earth, is moistened with water and plastered over the back and stomach, or wherever the rash mostly prevails; all this is but a temporary relief, for as soon as it is dry, the irritation and burning are as bad as ever.

The best remedy I have met with, beyond patient endurance of the evil, is bathing in rain-water, which soothes the violent sensations, and

eventually cools the body. Those people who indulge most in the good things of this life are the greatest sufferers by this annual attack. The benefits attending temperance are sure to bring an ample reward to the possessors of that virtue under all circumstances, but in India more particularly; I have invariably observed the most abstemious people are the least subject to attacks from the prevailing complaints of the country, whether fever or cholera, and when attacked the most likely subjects to recover from those alarming disorders.

At this moment of anxious solicitude throughout Europe, when that awful malady, the cholera, is spreading from city to city with rapid strides, the observations I have been enabled to make by personal acquaintance with afflicted subjects in India, may be acceptable to my readers; although I heartily pray our Heavenly Father may in His goodness and mercy preserve our country from that awful calamity, which has been so generally fatal in other parts of the world.

The Natives of India designate cholera by

the word "Hyza," which with them signifies "the plague." By this term, however, they do not mean that direful disorder so well known to us by the same appellation; as, if I except the Mussulmaun pilgrims, who have seen, felt, and described its ravages on their journey to Mecca, that complaint seems to be unknown to the present race of Native inhabitants of Hindoostaun. The word "hyza," or "plague" would be applied by them to all complaints of an epidemic or contagious nature by which the population were suddenly attacked, and death ensued. When the cholera first appeared in India (which I believe was in 1817), it was considered by the Natives a new complaint.

In all cases of irritation of the stomach, disordered bowels, or severe feverish symptoms, the Mussulmaun doctors strongly urge the adoption of "starving out the complaint." This has become a law of Nature with all the sensible part of the community; and when the cholera first made its appearance in the Upper Provinces of Hindoostaun, those Natives who observed their prescribed temperance

were, when attacked, most generally preserved from the fatal consequences of the disorder.

On the very first symptom of cholera occurring in a member of a Mussulmaun family, a small portion of zahur morah (derived from zahur, poison; morah, to kill or destroy, and thence understood as an antidote to poison, some specimens of which I have brought with me to England) moistened with rose-water, is promptly administered, and, if necessary, repeated at short intervals; due care being taken to prevent the patient from receiving any thing into the stomach, excepting rose-water, the older the more efficacious in its property to remove the malady. Wherever zahur morah was not available, secungebeen (syrup of vinegar) was administered with much the same effect. The person once attacked, although the symptoms should have subsided by this application, is rigidly deprived of nourishment for two or three days, and even longer if deemed expedient; occasionally allowing only a small quantity of rose-water, which they say effectually removes from the stomach and bowels those

corrupt adhesions which, in their opinion, is the primary cause of the complaint.

The cholera, I observed, seldom attacked abstemious people; when, however, this was the case, it generally followed a full meal; whether of rice or bread made but little difference, much I believe depending on the general habit of the subject; as among the peasantry and their superiors the complaint raged with equal malignity, wherever a second meal was resorted to whilst the person had reason to believe the former one had not been well digested. An instance of this occurred under my own immediate observation in a woman, the wife of an old and favourite servant. She had imprudently eaten a second dinner, before her stomach, by her own account, had digested the preceding meal. She was not a strong woman, but in tolerable good health; and but a few hours previous to the attack I saw her in excellent spirits, without the most remote appearance of indisposition. The usual applications failed of success, and she died in a few hours. This poor woman never could be

persuaded to abstain from food at the stated period of meals; and the Natives were disposed to conclude that this had been the actual cause of her sufferings and dissolution.

In 1821 the cholera raged with even greater violence than on its first appearance in Hindoostaun; by that time many remedies had been suggested, through the medium of the press, by the philanthropy and skill of European medical practioners, the chief of whom recommended calomel in large doses, from twenty to thirty grains, and opium proportioned to the age and strength of the patient. I never found the Natives, however, willing to accept this as a remedy, but I have heard that amongst Europeans it was practised with success. From a paragraph which I read in the Bengal papers, I prepared a mixture that I have reason to think, through the goodness of Divine Providence, was beneficial to many poor people who applied for it in the early stages of the complaint, and who followed the rule laid down of complete abstinence, until they were out of danger from a relapse, and even then for a long time to be

cautious in the quantity and digestible quality of their daily meal. The mixture was a follows:

Brandy, one pint; oil or spirit of peppermint, if the former, half an ounce—if the latter, one ounce; ground black pepper, two ounces; yellow rind of oranges grated, without any of the white, one ounce; these were kept closely stopped and occasionally shook, a table-spoonful administered for each dose, the patient well covered up from the air, and warmth created by blankets or any other means within their power, repeating the dose as the case required.

Of the many individuals who were attacked with this severe malady in our house very few died, and those, it was believed, were victims to an imprudent determination to partake of food before they were convalescent,—individuals who never could be prevailed on to practise abstemious habits, which we had good reason for believing was the best preventative against the complaint during those sickly seasons. The general opinion entertained both by Natives and Europeans, at those awful periods, was, that the cholera was conveyed in the air; very few imagined that it was infectious, as it frequently

attacked some members of a family and the rest escaped, although in close attendance—even such as failed not to pay the last duties to the deceased according to Mussulmaun custom, which exposed them more immediately to danger if infection existed ;—yet no fears were ever entertained, nor did I ever hear an opinion expressed amongst them, that it had been, or could be conveyed from one person to another.

Native children generally escaped the attack, and I never heard of an infant being in the slightest degree visited by this malady. It is, however, expedient to use such precautionary measures as sound sense and reason may suggest, since wherever the cholera has appeared, it has proved a national calamity, and not a partial scourge to a few individuals; all are alike in danger of its consequences, whether the disorder be considered infectious or not, and therefore the precautions I have urged in India, amongst the Native communities, I recommend with all humility here, that cleanliness and abstemious diet be observed among all classes of people.

In accordance with the prescribed antidote

to infection from scarlet fever in England, I gave camphor (to be worn about the person) to the poor in my vicinity, and to all the Natives over whom I had either influence or control; I caused the rooms to be frequently fumigated with vinegar or tobacco, and labaun (frankincense) burnt occasionally. I would not, however, be so presumptuous to insinuate even that these were preventatives to cholera, yet in such cases of universal terror as the one in question, there can be no impropriety in recommending measures which cannot injure, and may benefit, if only by giving a purer atmosphere to the room inhabited by individuals either in sickness or in health. But above all things, aware that human aid or skill can never effect a remedy unaided by the mercy and power of Divine Providence, let our trust be properly placed in His goodness, "who giveth medicine to heal our sickness," and humbly intreat that He may be pleased to avert the awful calamity from our shores which threatens and disturbs Europe generally at this moment.

Were we to consult Nature rather than inordi-

nate gratifications, we should find in following her dictates the best security to health at all times, but more particularly in seasons of prevailing sickness. Upon the first indications of cholera, I have observed the stomach becomes irritable, the bowels are attacked by griping pains, and unnatural evacuations; then follow sensations of faintness, weakness, excessive thirst, the pulse becomes languid, the surface of the body cold and clammy, whilst the patient feels inward burning heat, with spasms in the legs and arms.

In the practice of Native doctors, I have noticed that they administer saffron to alleviate violent sickness with the best possible effect. A case came under my immediate observation, of a young female who had suffered from a severe illness similar in every way to the cholera; it was not, however, suspected to be that complaint, because it was not then prevailing at Lucknow: after some days the symptoms subsided, excepting the irritation of her stomach, which, by her father's account, obstinately rejected every thing offered for eleven days.

When I saw her, she was apparently sinking under exhaustion; I immediately tendered the remedy recommended by my husband, viz. twelve grains of saffron, moistened with a little rose-water; and found with real joy that it proved efficacious; half the quantity in doses were twice repeated that night, and in the morning the patient was enabled to take a little gruel, and in a reasonable time entirely recovered her usual health and strength.

"I have heard of people being frightened into an attack of cholera by apprehending the evil: this, however, can only occur with very weak minds, and such as have neglected in prosperity to prepare their hearts for adversity. When I first reached India, the fear of snakes, which I expected to find in every path, embittered my existence. This weakness was effectually corrected by the wise admonitions of Meer Hadjee Shaah, "If you trust in God, he will preserve you from every evil; be assured the snake has no power to wound without permission!"

LETTER XIX.

Kannoge.—Formerly the capital of Hindoostaun.—Ancient castle.—Durability of the bricks made by the aborigines.—Prospect from the Killaah (castle).—Ruins.—Treasures found therein.—The Durgah Baallee Peer Kee.—Mukhburrahs.—Ancient Mosque.—Singular structure of some stone pillars.—The Durgah Mukdoom Jhaunneer.—Conversions to the Mussulmaun Faith.—Anecdote.—Ignorance of the Hindoos.—Sculpture of the Ancients.—Mosque inhabited by thieves.—Discovery of Nitre.—Method of extracting it.—Conjectures of its produce.—Residence in the castle.—Reflections.

KANNOGE, now comparatively a Native village, situated about midway between Cawnpore and Futtyghur, is said to have been the capital of Hindoostaun, and according to Hindoo tradition was the seat of the reigning Rajahs two thousand years prior to the invasion of India by the Sultaun Timoor. If credit be

given to current report, the Hindoos deny that the Deluge extended to India as confidently as the Chinese declare that it never reached China.

These accounts I merely state as the belief of the Hindoos, and those the least educated perhaps of the population. The Mussulmauns, however, are of a different opinion; the account they give of the Deluge resembles the Jewish, and doubtless the information Mahumud has conveyed to his followers was derived from that source.

Some of the people are weak enough to conjecture that Kannoge was founded by Cain. It bears, however, striking features of great antiquity, and possesses many sufficient evidences of its former extent and splendour to warrant the belief that it has been the capital of no mean kingdom in ages past. The remarks I was enabled to make during a residence of two years at Kannoge may not be deemed altogether uninteresting to my readers, although my descriptions may be "clouded with imperfections." I will not, therefore, offer any useless

apologies for introducing them in my present Letter.

Kannoge, known as the oldest capital of the far-famed kingdom of Hindoostaun, is now a heap upon heap of ruins, proclaiming to the present generation, even in her humility, how vast in extent and magnificent in style she once was, when inhabited by the rulers of that great empire. The earth entombs emblems of greatness, of riches, and of man's vain glorious possessions; buildings have been reared by successive generations on mounds which embowelled the ruined mansion of predecessors.

The killaah (castle) in which during two years we shared an abode with sundry crows, bats, scorpions, centipedes, and other living things, was rebuilt about seven hundred years ago, on the original foundation which, as tradition states, has continued for more than two thousand years. The materials of which the walls are constructed are chiefly bricks.

It is worthy of remark, that the bricks of ancient manufacture in India give evidence of remarkable durability, and are very similar in

quality to the Roman bricks occasionally discovered in England. At Delhi I have met with bricks that have been undoubtedly standing six or seven centuries; and at Kannoge, if tradition speak true, the same articles which were manufactured upwards of two thousand years ago, and which retains the colour of the brightest red, resemble more the hardest stone than the things we call bricks of the present day. After the minutest examination of these relics of ancient labour, I am disposed to think that the clay must have been more closely kneaded, and the bricks longer exposed to the action of fire than they are by the present mode of manufacturing them; and such is their durability, that they are only broken with the greatest difficulty.

The killaah was originally a fortified castle, and is situated near the river Kaullee Nuddie, a branch or arm of the Ganges, the main stream of which flows about two miles distant. During the periodical rains, the Ganges overflows its banks, inundates the whole tract of land intervening between the two rivers,

forming an extent of water more resembling a sea than a river.

At the time we occupied the old castle, scarcely one room could be called habitable; and I learned with regret after the rains of 1826 and 1827, which were unusually heavy, that the apartments occupied since the Honourable East India Company's rule by their taasseel-dhaars, (sub-collectors of the revenue), were rendered entirely useless as a residence.

The comfortless interior of that well-remembered place was more than compensated by the situation. Many of my English acquaintance, who honoured me by visits at Kannoge, will, I think, agree with me, that the prospect from the killaah was indescribably grand. The Ganges and the Kaullee Nuddee were presented at one view; and at certain seasons of the year, as far as the eye could reach, their banks, and well-cultivated fields, clothed in a variety of green, seemed to recall the mind to the rivers of England, and their precious borders of grateful herbage. Turning in another direction, the eye was met by an impenetrable boundary

of forest trees, magnificent in growth, and rich in foliage; at another glance, ruins of antiquity, or the still remaining tributes to saints; the detached villages; the sugar plantations; the agriculturists at their labour; the happy peasantry laden with their purchases from the bazaars; the Hindoo women and children, bearing their earthen-vessels to and from the river for supplies of water:—each in their turn formed objects of attraction from without, that more than repaid the absence of ordinary comforts in the apartment from which they were viewed. The quiet calm of this habitation, unbroken by the tumultuous sounds of a city, was so congenial to my taste, that when obliged to quit it, I felt almost as much regret as when I heard that the rains had destroyed the place which had been to me a home of peaceful enjoyment.

The city of Kannoge has evidently suffered the severities of a shock from an earthquake: the present inhabitants cannot tell at what period this occurred, but it must have been some centuries since, for the earth is grown over immense ruins, in an extensive circuit,

forming a strong but coarse carpet of grass on the uneven mounds containing the long-buried mansions of the great. The rapid streams from the periodical rains forcing passages between the ruins, has in many places formed deep and frightful ravines, as well as rugged roads and pathways for the cattle and the traveller.

After each heavy fall of rain, the peasantry and children are observed minutely searching amongst the ruins for valuables washed out with the loose earth and bricks by the force of the streams, and, I am told, with successful returns for their toil; jewels, gold and silver ornaments, coins of gold and silver, all of great antiquity, are thus secured; these are bought by certain merchants of the city, by whom they are retailed to English travellers, who generally when on a river voyage to or from the Upper Provinces, contrive, if possible, to visit Kannoge to inspect the ruins, and purchase curiosities.

There is a stately range of buildings at no great distance from the killaah (castle), in a tolerable state of preservation, called "Baallee

Peer Kee Durgah." The entrance is by a stone gateway of very superior but ancient workmanship, and the gates of massy wood studded with iron. I observed that on the wood framework over the entrance, many a stray horseshoe has been nailed, which served to remind me of Wales, where it is so commonly seen on the doors of the peasantry. I am not aware but that the same motives may have influenced the two people in common.

To the right of the entrance stands a large mosque, which, I am told, was built by Baallee himself; who, it is related, was a remarkably pious man of the Mussulmaun persuasion, and had acquired so great celebrity amongst his countrymen as a perfect durweish, as to be surnamed peer (saint). The exact time when he flourished at Kannoge, I am unable to say; but judging from the style of architecture, and other concurring circumstances, it must have been built at different periods, some parts being evidently of very ancient structure.

There are two mukhburrahs, within the range, which viewed from the main road, stand

in a prominent situation: one of these mukhburrahs was built by command, or in the reign (I could not learn which), of Shah Allumgeer over the remains of Ballee Peer; and the second contains some of the peer's immediate relatives.

From the expensive manner in which these buildings are constructed, some idea may be formed of the estimation this pious man was held in by his countrymen. The mausoleums are of stone, and elevated on a base of the same material, with broad flights of steps to ascend by. The stone must have been brought hither from a great distance, as I do not find there is a single quarry nearer than Delhi or Agra. There are people in charge of this Durgah who voluntarily exile themselves from the society of the world, in order to lead lives of strict devotion and under the imagined presiding influence of the saint's pure spirit; they keep the sanctuary from pollution, burn lamps nightly on the tomb, and subsist by the occasional contributions of the charitable visitors and their neighbours.

Within the boundary of the Durgah, I re-

marked a very neat stone tomb, in good preservation: this, I was told, was the burying-place of the Kalipha (head servant) who had attended on and survived Baallee Peer; this man had saved money in the service of the saint, which he left to be devoted to the repairs of the Durgah; premising that his tomb should be erected near that of his sainted master, and lamps burned every night over the graves, which is faithfully performed by the people in charge of the Durgah.

After visiting the ruins of Hindoo temples, which skirt the borders of the river in many parts of the district of Kannoge, the eye turns with satisfaction to the ancient mosques of the Mussulmauns, which convey conviction to the mind, that even in the remote ages of Hindoostaun, there have been men who worshipped God; whilst the piles of mutilated stone idols also declare the zealous Mussulmaun to have been jealous for his Creator's glory. I have noticed about Kannoge hundreds of these broken or defaced images collected together in heaps (generally under trees), which were for-

merly the objects to which the superstitious Hindoos bowed in worship, until the more intelligent Mussulmauns strayed into the recesses of the deepest darkness to show the idolators that God could not be represented by a block of stone.

In a retired part of Kannoge, I was induced to visit the remains of an immense building, expecting the gratification of a fine prospect from its towering elevation; my surprise, however, on entering the portal drove from my thoughts the first object of my visit.

The whole building is on a large scale, and is, together with the gateway, steps, roof, pillars, and offices, composed entirely of stone: from what I had previously conceived of the ancient Jewish temples, this erection struck me as bearing a strong resemblance. It appears that there is not the slightest portion of either wood or metal used in the whole construction; and, except where some sort of cement was indispensable, not a trace of mortar is to be discovered in the whole fabric. The pillars of the colonnade, which form three sides of the square,

are singular piles of stones, erected with great exactness in the following order:—

A broad block of stone forms the base; on the centre is raised a pillar of six feet by two square, on this rests a circular stone, resembling a grindstone, on which is placed another upright pillar, and again a circular, until five of each are made to rest on the base to form a pillar; the top circulars or caps are much larger than the rest; and on these the massy stone beams for the roof are supported. How these ponderous stones forming the whole roof were raised, unacquainted as these people ever have been with machinery, is indeed a mystery sufficient to impress on the weak-minded a current report amongst the Natives, that the whole building was erected in one night by supernatural agency, from materials which had formerly been used in the construction of a Hindoo temple, but destroyed by the zeal of the Mussulmauns soon after their invasion of Hindoostaun.

The pillars I examined narrowly, and could not find any traces of cement or fastening; yet, excepting two or three which exhibit a slight

curve, the whole colonnade is in a perfect state. The hall, including the colonnade, measures one hundred and eighty feet by thirty, and has doubtless been, at some time or other, a place of worship, in all probability for the Mussulmauns, there being still within the edifice a sort of pulpit of stone evidently intended for the reader, both from its situation and construction; this has sustained many rude efforts from the chisel in the way of ornament not strictly in accordance with the temple itself; besides which, there are certain tablets engraved in the Persian and Arabic character, which contain verses or chapters from the Khoraun; so that it may be concluded, whatever was the original design of the building, it has in later periods served the purposes of a mosque.

In some parts of this building traces exist to prove that the materials of which it has been formed originally belonged to the Hindoos, for upon many of the stones there are carved figures according with their mythology; such stones, however, have been placed generally upside down, and attempts to deface the graven

figures are conspicuous,—they are all turned inside, whilst the exterior appearance is rough and uneven. It may be presumed they were formerly outward ornaments to a temple of some sort, most likely a "Bootkhanah" (the house for idols).

I have visited the Durgah, called Mukhdoom Jhaaunneer, situated in the heart of the present city, which is said to have been erected nearly a thousand years ago, by the order of a Mussulmaun King; whether of Hindoostaun or not, I could not learn. It bears in its present dilapidated state, evidences both of good taste and superior skill in architecture, as well as of costliness in the erection, superior to any thing I expected to find amongst the ancient edifices of Hindoostaun.

The antique arches supporting the roof, rest on pillars of a good size, the whole are beautifully carved. The dome, which was originally in the centre of this pavilion, has been nearly destroyed by time; and although the light thus thrown into the interior through the aperture, has a good effect, it pained me to see this noble

edifice falling to decay for the want of timely repairs. Notwithstanding this Durgah is said to have been built so many years, the stone-work, both of the interior and exterior, is remarkably fresh in appearance, and would almost discredit its reputed age. The walls and bastions of the enclosure appear firm on their foundations; the upper part only seem at all decayed.

The side rooms to the Durgah, of which there are several on each side the building, have all a fretwork of stone very curiously cut, which serves for windows, and admits light and air to the apartments, and present a good screen to persons within; this it should seem was the only contrivance for windows in general use by the ancient inhabitants of Hindoostaun; and even at the present day (excepting a few Native gentlemen who have benefited by English example), glazed windows are not seen in any of the mansions in the Upper Provinces of India.

I noticed that in a few places in these buildings, where the prospect is particularly fine, small arches were left open, from whence the eye is directed to grand and superb scenery,

afforded by the surrounding country, and the remains of stately buildings. From one of these arches the killaah is seen to great advantage, at the distance of two miles: both the Durgah and the killaah are erected on high points of land. I have often, whilst wandering outside the killaah, looked up at the elevation with sensations of mistrust, that whilst doing so it might, from its known insecure state, fall and bury me in its ruins; but viewing it from that distance, and on a level with the Durgah, the appearance was really gratifying.

At Kannoge are to be seen many mukh-burrahs, said to have been erected over the remains of those Hindoos who at different periods had been converted to the Mussulmaun faith. This city, I am informed, has been the chosen spot of righteous men and sainted characters during all periods of the Mussulmaun rule in Hindoostaun, by whose example many idolators were brought to have respect for the name of God, and in some instances even to embrace the Mahumudan faith. Amongst the many accounts of remarkable conversions

related to me by the old inhabitants of that city, I shall select one which, however marvellous in some points, is nevertheless received with full credit by the faithful of the present day :—

" A very pious Syaad took up his residence many hundred years since at Kannoge, when the chief part of the inhabitants were Hindoos, and, as might be expected, many of them were Brahmins. He saw with grief the state of darkness with which the minds of so many human beings were imbued, and without exercising any sort of authority over them, he endeavoured by the mildest persuasions to convince these people that the adoration they paid to graven images, and the views they entertained of the river Ganges possessing divine properties, were both absurd and wicked.

" The Syaad used his best arguments to explain to them the power and attributes of the only true God; and though his labours were unceasing, and his exemplary life made him beloved, yet for a long period all his endeavours proved unsuccessful. His advice, however, was at all times tendered with mildness, his manners

so humble, and his devotion so remarkable, that in the course of time the people flocked around him, whenever he was visible, to listen to his discourse, which generally contained some words of well-timed exhortation and kind instruction. His great aim was directed towards enlightening the Brahmins, by whom, he was aware, the opinions of the whole population were influenced, and to whom alone was confined such knowledge as at that remote period was conveyed by education.

"Ardently zealous in the great work he had commenced, the Syaad seemed undaunted by the many obstacles he had to contend with. Always retaining his temper unruffled, he combined perseverance with his solicitude, and trusted in God for a happy result in His good time. On an occasion of a great Hindoo festival the population of the then immense city were preparing to visit the Ganges, where they expected to be purified from their sins by ablution in that holy river, as they term it. The Ganges, at that period, I understand, flowed some miles distant from the city.

"The Syaad took this occasion to exhort the multitude to believe in God; and after a preliminary discourse, explaining the power of Him whom he alone worshipped, he asked the people if they would be persuaded to follow the only true God, if His power should be demonstrated to them by the appearance of the river they adored flowing past the city of Kannoge, instead of, as at that moment, many miles distant. Some of his auditory laughed at the idea, and derided the speaker; others doubted, and asked whether the God whom the Mussulmauns worshipped possessed such power as the Syaad had attributed to Him; many Brahmins, however, agreed to the terms proposed, solemnly assuring the holy man he should find them converts to his faith if this miracle should be effected by the God he worshipped.

"It is related that the Syaad passed the whole day and night in devout prayers; and when the morning dawned the idolators saw the river Ganges flowing past the city in all the majesty of that mighty stream. The Brahmins were at

once convinced, and this evidence of God's power worked the way to the conversion of nearly the whole population of Kannogé."

The number of the inhabitants may be supposed to have been immensely great at the period in question, as it is related that on the occasion of their conversion the Brahmins threw away the cords which distinguish them from other castes of Hindoos, (each cord weighing about a drachm English), which when collected together to be consigned to the flames, were weighed, and found to be upwards of forty-five seers; a seer of that province being nearly equal to two pounds English. The Brahmins, it will be recollected, form but a small portion of that community, and are the priesthood of the Hindoos, very similar in their order to the Levites among the children of Israel.

There are still remaining traces of monuments erected over the remains of converted Hindoos, which have been particularly pointed out to me by intelligent men, from whom I have received information of that great work which alone would render Kannoge a place of interest with-

out another object to attract the observation of a reflecting mind.

Notwithstanding that the Ganges continues to water the banks of Kannoge, and that other proofs exist of idolatry having ceased for a considerable time to disgrace the inhabitants, it is still partially occupied by Hindoos, who retain the custom of their forefathers according to the original, whether descendants of the converted, or fresh settlers is not in my power to determine; but I may remark, without prejudice, from what I have been enabled to glean in conversation with a few Hindoos of this city, that they have a better idea of one over-ruling Supreme power than I have ever been able to find elsewhere in the same class of people.

I was much interested with an old blacksmith, who was employed at the killaah. On one occasion I asked him what views he entertained of the Source from whence all good proceeds—whether he believed in God? He replied promptly, and as if surprised that such a doubt could exist, "Yes, surely; it is to Allah (God) the supreme, I am indebted for my existence;

Allah created all things, the world and all that is in it: I could not have been here at this moment, but for the goodness of Allah!"

There are amongst them men of good moral character, yet in a state of deplorable ignorance, a specimen of which may be here noticed in a person of property employed in the service of Government, at the killaah; he is of the caste denominated Burghutt,—one of the tribe which professes so great reverence for life, as to hold it sinful to destroy the meanest reptile or insect; and, therefore, entirely abstain from eating either, fish, flesh, or fowl:—yet, when I pressed for his undisguised opinion, I found that he not only denied the existence of God, but declared it was his belief the world formed itself.

I was induced to walk three miles from the killaah, on a cool day in December, to view the remains of a piece of sculpture of great antiquity. I confess myself but little acquainted with Hindoo mythology, and therefore my description will necessarily be imperfect. The figure of Luchmee is represented in relief, on a

slab of stone eight feet by four, surrounded by about a hundred figures in different attitudes. Luchmee, who is of course the most prominent, is figured with eight arms; in his right hands, are sabres, in his left, shields; his left foot upon the hand of a female, and the right on a snake. This figure is about four feet high, and finely formed, standing in a martial attitude; his dress (unlike that of the modern Hindoo) is represented very tight, and, altogether, struck me as more resembling the European than the Asiatic: on his head I remarked a high-crowned military cap without a peak: the feet were bare. There can be no doubt this figure is emblematical; the Hindoos however make it an object of their impure and degrading worship.

I could not help expressing my surprise on finding this idol in such excellent condition, having had so many samples throughout Kannoge of the vengeance exercised by Mussulmaun zeal, on the idols of the Hindoos. My guide assured me, that this relic of antiquity had only been spared from the general destruction of by-gone periods by its

having been buried, through the supposed influence of unconverted venerating Brahmins; but that within the last thirty years it had been discovered and dug out of the earth, to become once more an ornament to the place. My own ideas lead me to suppose that it might have been buried by the same convulsion of the earth which overturned the idolatrous city.

I observed that a very neat little building, of modern date, was erected over this antiquity, and on inquiry found that the Hindoos were indebted to the liberality of a lady for the means of preserving this relic from the ravages of the seasons.

There is in the same vicinity a second piece of mythological sculpture, in a less perfect state than Luchmee, the sabred arm of which has been struck off, and the figure otherwise mutilated by the zealous Mussulmauns, who have invariably defaced or broken the idols wherever they have been able to do so with impunity. On a platform of stone and earth, near this place, a finely-formed head of stone is placed,

which my guide gravely assured me was of very ancient date, and represented Adam, the father of men!

I heard with pain during my sojourn at Kannoge, that the house of God had been made the resort of thieves; a well-known passage of Scripture struck me forcibly when the transaction was related.

I have before stated that the mosque is never allowed to be locked or closed to the public. Beneath the one I am about to speak of (a very ancient building near to Baallee Peer's Durgah), is a vaulted suite of rooms denominated taar-khanah, intended as a retreat from the intense heat of the day; such as is to be met with in most great men's residences in India. In this place, a gang of thieves from the city had long found a secure and unsuspected spot wherein to deposit their plunder. It happened, however, that very strict search was instituted after some stolen property belonging to an individual of Kannoge; whether any suspicions had been excited about the place in question, I do not recollect, but thither the police directed their

steps, and after removing some loose earth they discovered many valuable articles,—shawls, gold ornaments, sabres, and other costly articles of plunder. It is presumed,—for the thieves were not known or discovered,—that they could not possibly be Mussulmauns, since the very worst characters among this people hold the house of God in such strict veneration, that they, of all persons, could not be suspected of having selected so sacred a place to deposit the spoils of the plunderer.

The process of obtaining nitre from the earth is practised at Kannoge by the Natives in the most simple way imaginable, without any assistance from art. They discover the spot where nitre is deposited by the small white particles which work through the strata of earth to the surface. When a vein is discovered, to separate the nitre from the earth, the following simple method is resorted to :—large troughs filled with water are prepared, into which the masses of earth containing nitre are thrown; the earth is allowed to remain undisturbed for some time, after which it is well stirred, and

then allowed to settle; the water by this means becomes impregnated with the nitre, and is afterwards boiled in large iron pans, from which all the dirt is carefully skimmed, until the water is completely evaporated, and the nitre deposited in the pans.

I know not how far the admixture of animal bodies with the soil may tend to produce this article, but it is a fact, that those places which bear the strongest proofs of having received the bodies of both men and beasts, produce it in the greatest abundance.

The retirement of Kannoge afforded me so many pleasant ways of occupying time, that I always look back to the period of my sojourn at the old killaah with satisfaction. The city is sufficiently distant from the killaah to leave the latter within reach of supplies, without the annoyance of the bustle and confusion inseparable from a Native city. In my daily wanderings a few peasantry only crossed my path; the farmers and citizens were always attentive, and willing to do us such kind offices as we at any time required. They respected, I may say vene-

rated my husband; and I must own that my feelings oblige me to remember with gratitude the place and the people whence I drew so many benefits.

Here I could indulge in long walks without incurring the penalty of a departure from established custom, which in most well-populated parts of Hindoostaun restrains European ladies from the exercise so congenial to their health and cherished habits. Should any Englishwoman venture to walk abroad in the city of Lucknow, for instance,—to express their most liberal opinion of the act,—she would be judged by the Natives as a person careless of the world's opinion. But here I was under no such constraint; my walks were daily recreations after hours of quiet study in the most romantic retirement of a ruined killaah, where, if luxury consists in perfect satisfaction with the objects by which we are surrounded, I may boast that it was found here during my two years' residence.

LETTER XX.

Delhi.—Description of the city.—Marble hall.—The Queen's Mahul (palace).—Audience with the King and Queen.—Conversation with them.—Character of their Majesties.—Visit to a Muckburrah.—Soobadhaars.—The nature of the office.—Durgah of Shah Nizaam ood deen.—Tomb of Shah Allum.—Ruins in the vicinity of Delhi.—Antique pillars (Kootub.)—Prospect from its galleries.—Anecdotes of Juangheer and Khareem Zund.

My visit to Delhi, once the great capital of Hindoostaun, and the residence of the great Sultauns, has made impressions of a lasting kind, and presented a moral lesson to my mind, I should be sorry to forget in after years; for there I witnessed the tombs of righteous men in perfect repair after the lapse of many centuries, standing in the midst of the mouldering relics of kings, princes, and nobles, many of whose career, we learn from history, was com-

paratively of recent date; yet, excepting in one solitary instance of Shah Allum's grave, without so much of order remaining as would tell to the passing traveller the rank of each individual's mausoleum, now either entirely a ruin or fast mouldering to decay.

The original city of Delhi presents to view one vast extent of ruins; abounding in mementos of departed worth, as well as in wrecks of greatness, ingenuity, and magnificence. Why the present city was erected or the former one deserted, I cannot venture an opinion, neither can I remember correctly in what reign the royal residence was changed; but judging from the remnants of the old, I should imagine it to have been equally extensive with the modern Delhi. A part of the old palace is still standing, whither the present King, Akbaar Shah, occasionally resorts for days together, attracted perhaps by sympathy for his ancestors, or by that desire for change inherent in human nature, and often deemed essential to health in the climate of Hindoostaun.

The city of Delhi is enclosed by a wall; the

houses, which are generally of brick or red stone, appear to good advantage, being generally elevated a story or two from the ground-floor, and more regularly constructed than is usual in Native cities. Mosques, mukhburrahs, and emaum-baarahs, in all directions, diversify the scene with good effect; whilst the various shops and bazaars, together with the outpourings of the population to and from the markets, give an animation to the whole view which would not be complete without them.

The palace occupies an immense space of ground, enclosed by high walls, and entered by a gateway of grand architecture. On either side the entrance I noticed lines of compact buildings, occupied by the military, reaching to the second gateway, which is but little inferior in style and strength to the grand entrance; and here again appear long lines of buildings similarly occupied. I passed through several of these formidable barriers before I reached the marble hall, where the King holds his durbar (court) at stated times; but as mine was a mere unceremonious visit to the King

and Queen, it was not at the usual hour of durbar, and I passed through the hall without making any particular observations, although I could perceive it was not deficient in the costliness and splendour suited to the former greatness of the Indian empire.

After being conveyed through several splendid apartments, I was conducted to the Queen's mahul (palace for females), where his Majesty and the Queen were awaiting my arrival. I found on my entrance the King seated in the open air in an arm chair enjoying his hookha; the Queen's musnud was on the ground, close by the side of her venerable husband. Being accustomed to Native society, I knew how to render the respect due from an humble individual to personages of their exalted rank. After having left my shoes at the entrance and advanced towards them, my salaams were tendered, and then the usual offering of nuzzas, first to the King and then to the Queen, who invited me to a seat on her own carpet,—an honour I knew how to appreciate from my acquaintance with the etiquette observed on such occasions.

The whole period of my visit was occupied in very interesting conversation; eager inquiries were made respecting England, the Government, the manners of the Court, the habits of the people, my own family affairs, my husband's views in travelling, and his adventures in England, my own satisfaction as regarded climate, and the people with whom I was so immediately connected by marriage;—the conversation, indeed, never flagged an instant, for the condescending courtesy of their Majesties encouraged me to add to their entertainment, by details which seemed to interest and delight them greatly.

On taking leave his Majesty very cordially shook me by the hand, and the Queen embraced me with warmth. Both appeared, and expressed themselves, highly gratified with the visit of an English lady who could explain herself in their language without embarrassment, or the assistance of an interpreter, and who was the more interesting to them from the circumstance of being the wife of a Syaad; the Queen indeed was particular in reminding me that "the Syaads were

in a religious point of view, the nobles of the Mussulmauns, and reverenced as such far more than those titled characters who receive their distinction from their fellow-mortals."

I was grieved to be obliged to accept the Queen's parting present of an embroidered scarf, because I knew her means were exceedingly limited compared with the demands upon her bounty; but I could not refuse that which was intended to do me honour at the risk of wounding those feelings I so greatly respected. A small ring, of trifling value, was then placed by the Queen on my finger, as she remarked, "to remind me of the giver."

The King's countenance, dignified by age, possesses traces of extreme beauty; he is much fairer than Asiatics usually are; his features are still fine, his hair silvery white; intelligence beams upon his brow, his conversation gentle and refined, and his condescending manners hardly to be surpassed by the most refined gentleman of Europe. I am told by those who have been long intimate with his habits in private, that he leads a life of strict piety and tem-

perance, equal to that of a durweish of his faith, whom he imitates in expending his income on others without indulging in a single luxury himself.

The Queen's manners are very amiable and condescending; she is reported to be as highly gifted with intellectual endowments as I can affirm she is with genuine politeness.

I was induced to visit the mukhburrah of the great-great-grandfather of the present King of Oude, who, at his death,—which occurred at Delhi, I believe,—was one of the Soobadhaars of the sovereign ruler of India. This nobleman, in his time, had been a staunch adherent to the descendants of Timoor, and had been rewarded for his fidelity by public honours and the private friendship of the King. The monument erected over his remains, is in a costly style of magnificence, and in the best possible condition, standing in the centre of a flower-garden which is enclosed by a stone wall, with a grand gateway of good architecture. The mukhburrah is spacious, and in the usual Mussulmaun style of building mausoleums; viz., a square, with a

dome, and is ascended by a flight of broad steps. This building stands about three miles from the city, in a good situation to be seen from the road. I was told that the family of Oude kept readers of the Khoraun in constant attendance at the mukhburrah; and I observed several soldiers, whose duty it was to guard the sacred spot, at the expense of the Oude government.

In explanation of the word Soobadhaar, it may not be uninteresting to remark in this place, that when the government of Hindoostaun flourished under the descendants of Timoor, Soobadhaars were appointed over districts, whose duty, in some respects, bore resemblance to that of a Governor; with this difference, that the soobadhaaries were gifts, not only for the life of the individuals, but to their posterity for ever, under certain restrictions and stipulations which made them tributary to, and retained them as dependants of, the reigning sovereign:—as for instance, a certain annual amount was to be punctually trans-

ferred to the treasury at Delhi; the province to be governed by the same laws, and the subjects to be under the same control in each Soobadhaarie as those of the parent sovereignty; the revenue exacted in the very same way; each Soobadhaar was bound to retain in his employ a given number of soldiers, horse and foot, fully equipped for the field, with perfect liberty to employ them as occasion served in the territory which he governed, whether against refractory subjects, or encroachments from neighbouring provinces; but in any emergency from the Court at Delhi, the forces to be, at all times, in readiness for the Sultaun's service at a moment's notice.

The gift of a Soobadhaarie was originally conferred on men who had distinguished themselves, either in the army, or in civil capacities, as faithful friends and servants of the Sultaun. In the course of time, some of these Soobadhaars, probably from just causes, threw off their strict allegiance to their Sovereign, abandoned the title of Soobadhaar, and adopted that

of Nuwaub in its stead, either with or without the consent of the Court of Delhi.

As it is not my intention to give a precise history of the Indian empire, but merely to touch on generalities, I have confined my remarks to a brief explanation of the nature of this office; and will only add, that whilst the Soobadhaars (afterwards the Nuwaubs) of Oude swayed over that beautiful province under these titles, they continued to send their usual nuzzas to the King of Delhi, although no longer considered under his dominion; thus acknowledging his superiority, because inferiors only present nuzzas. But when Ghauzee ood deen Hyder was created King of Oude, he could no longer be considered tributary to the House of Timoor, and the annual ceremony of sending a nuzza, I understood, was discontinued. The first King of Oude issued coins from his new mint almost immediately after his coronation, prior to which period the current money of that province bore the stamp of Delhi.

Shah Nizaam ood deen was one of the many Mussulmaun saints, whose history has interested

me much. He is said to have been dead about five hundred years, yet his memory is cherished by the Mussulmauns of the present day with veneration unabated by the lapse of years, thus giving to the world a moral and a religious lesson, "The great and the ambitious perish, and their glory dieth with them; but the righteous have a name amongst their posterity for ever."

I was familiar with the character of Nizaam ood deen long prior to my visit at the Court of Delhi, and, as may be supposed, it was with no common feeling of pleasure I embraced the opportunity of visiting the mausoleum erected over the remains of that righteous man.

The building originally was composed of the hard red stone, common to the neighbourhood of Delhi, with an occasional mixture of red bricks of a very superior quality; but considerable additions and ornamental improvements of pure white marble have been added to the edifice, from time to time, by different monarchs and nobles of Hindoostaun, whose pious respect for the memory of the righteous

Shah Nizaam ood deen is testified by these additions, which render the mausoleum at the present time as fresh and orderly as if but newly erected.

The style of the building is on the original, I might say, only plan of Mussulmaun mukhburrahs—square, with a cupola. It is a beautiful structure on a scale of moderate size. The pavements are of marble, as are also the pillars, which are fluted and inlaid with pure gold; the ceiling is of chaste enamel painting (peculiarly an Indian art, I fancy,) of the brightest colours. The cupola is of pure white marble, of exquisite workmanship and in good taste; its erection is of recent date, I understand, and the pious offering of the good Akbaar Shah, who, being himself a very religious personage, was determined out of his limited income to add this proof of his veneration for the sainted Nizaam to the many which his ancestors had shown.

The marble tomb enclosing the ashes of Shah Nizaam ood deen is in the centre of the building

immediately under the cupola; this tomb is about seven feet long by two, raised about a foot from the pavement; on the marble sides are engraved chapters from the Khoraun in the Arabic character, filled up with black; the tomb itself has a covering of very rich gold cloth, resembling a pall.

This tranquil spot is held sacred by all Mussulmauns. Here the sound of human feet are never heard; "Put off thy shoes," being quite as strictly observed near this venerated place, as when the mosque and emaum-baarah are visited by "the faithful;" who, as I have before remarked, whenever a prayer is about to be offered to God, cast off their shoes with scrupulous care, whether the place chosen for worship be in the mosque, the abode of men, or the wilderness.

I was permitted to examine the interior of the mausoleum. The calm stillness, which seemed hardly earthly; the neatness which pervaded every corner of the interior; the recollection of those virtues, which I so often heard had

distinguished Shah Nizaam's career on earth, impressed me with feelings at that moment I cannot forget; and it was with reluctance I turned from this object to wander among the surrounding splendid ruins, the only emblems left of departed greatness; where not even a tablet exists to mark the affection of survivors, or to point to the passing traveller the tomb of the monarch, the prince, or the noble,—except in the instance of Shah Allum,—whilst the humble-minded man's place of sepulture is kept repaired from age to age, and still retains the freshness of a modern structure in its five hundredth year.

There are men in charge of Shah Nizaam ood deen's mausoleum who lead devout lives, and subsist on the casual bounties gleaned from the charitable visitors to his shrine. Their time is passed in religious duties, reading the Khoraun over the ashes of the saint, and keeping the place clean and free from unholy intrusions. They do not deem this mode of existence derogatory; for to hold the situation of darogahs, or keepers of the tombs of the saints, who are held in

universal veneration amongst Mussulmauns, is esteemed an honourable privilege.

In this sketch of my visit to the tombs at Delhi, I must not omit one very remarkable cemetery, which, as the resting place of the last reigning sovereign of Hindoostaun, excited in me no small degree of interest, whilst contrasting the view it exhibited of fallen greatness, with the many evidences of royal magnificence.

The tomb I am about to describe is that erected over the remains of Shah Allum; and situated within view of the mausoleum of the righteous plebeian, Shah Nizaam. It is a simple, unadorned grave; no canopy of marble, or decorated hall, marks here the peaceful rest of a monarch, who in his life-time was celebrated for the splendour of his Court; a small square spot of earth, enclosed with iron railings, is all that remains to point to posterity the final resting place of the last monarch of Hindoostaun. His grave is made by his favourite daughter's side, whose affection had been his only solace in the last years of his

earthly sufferings; a little masonry of brick and plaster supports the mound of earth over his remains, on which I observed the grass was growing, apparently cultured by some friendly hand. At the period of my visit, the solitary ornament to this last terrestrial abode of a King was a luxuriant white jessamine tree, beautifully studded with blossoms, which scented the air around with a delightful fragrance, and scattered many a flower over the grave which it graced by its remarkable beauty, height, and luxuriance. The sole canopy that adorns Shah Allum's grave is the rich sky, with all its resplendant orbs of day and night, or clouds teeming with beneficent showers. Who then could be ambitious, vain, or proud, after viewing this striking contrast to the grave of Shah Nizaam? The vain-glorious humbled even in the tomb;—the humble minded exalted by the veneration ever paid to the righteous.

I was persuaded to visit the ruins of antiquity which are within a morning's drive of Delhi. Nothing that I there witnessed gave me so much pleasure as the far-famed Kootub, a monument

or pillar, of great antiquity, claimed equally by the Hindoo and Mussulmaun as due to their respective periods of sovereign rule. The site is an elevated spot, and from the traces of former buildings, I am disposed to believe this pillar, standing now erect and imposing, was one of the minarets of a mosque, and the only remains of such a building, which must have been very extensive, if the height and dimensions of the minaret be taken as a criterion of the whole.

This pillar has circular stairs within, leading to galleries extending all round, at stated distances, and forming five tiers from the first gallery to the top, which finishes with a circular room, and a canopy of stone, open on every side for the advantage of an extensive prospect. Verses from the Khoraun are cut out in large Arabic characters on the stones, which form portions of the pillar from the base to the summit in regular divisions; this could only be done with great labour, and, I should imagine, whilst the blocks of stone were on the level surface of the earth, which renders it still more probable that it was a Mussulmaun erection.

The view from the first gallery was really so magnificent, that I was induced to ascend to the second for a still bolder extent of prospect, which more than repaid me the task. I never remember to have seen so picturesque a panorama in any other place. Some of my party, better able to bear the fatigue, ascended to the third and fourth gallery. From them I learned that the beauty and extent of the view progressively increased until they reached the summit, from whence the landscape which fell beneath the eye surpassed description.

On the road back to Delhi, we passed some extensive remains of buildings, which I found on inquiry had been designed for an observatory by Jhy Sing,—whose extraordinary mind has rendered his name conspicuous in the annals of Hindoostaun,—but which was not completed while he lived. It may be presumed, since the work was never finished, that his countrymen either have not the talent, or the means to accomplish the scientific plan his superior mind had contemplated.

At the time I visited Delhi, I had but recently

recovered from a serious and tedious illness; I was therefore ill-fitted to pursue those researches which might have afforded entertaining material for my pen, and must, on that account, take my leave of this subject with regret, for the present, and merely add my acknowledgments to those kind friends who aided my endeavours in the little I was enabled to witness of that remarkable place, which to have viewed entirely would have taken more time and better health than I could command at that period. I could have desired to search out amongst the ruined mausoleums for those which contain the ashes of illustrious characters, rendered familiar and interesting by the several anecdotes current in Native society, to many of which I have listened with pleasure, as each possessed some good moral for the mind.

It is my intention to select two anecdotes for my present Letter, which will, I trust, prove amusing to my readers; one relates to Jhaungeer, King of India; the other to Kaareem Zund, King of Persia. I am not aware that either has appeared before the public in our language,

although they are so frequently related by the Natives in their domestic circles. If they have not, I need hardly apologise for introducing them, and on the other hand, if they have before been seen, I may plead my ignorance of the circumstance in excuse for their insertion here.

I have already noticed that, among the true Mussulmauns, there are no religious observances more strictly enforced than the keeping the fast of Rumzaun, and the abstaining from fermented liquors. It is related, however, that "A certain king of India, named Jhaungeer, was instructed by his tutors in the belief, that on the day of judgment, kings and rulers will not have to answer either for the sin of omission or commission, as regards these two commands; but that the due administration of justice to the subjects over whom they are placed, will be required at the hands of every king, ruler, or governor, on the face of the earth.

"Jhaungeer was determined to walk strictly in the path which he was assured would lead him to a happy eternity; and, therefore, in his

reign every claim of justice was most punctiliously discharged. Each case requiring decision was immediately brought to the foot of the throne; for the King would not allow business of such importance to his soul's best interest to be delegated to the guardianship of his Vizier, or other of his servants; and in order to give greater facility to complainants of every degree, the King invented the novel contrivance of a large bell, which was fixed immediately over his usual seat on the musnud, which bell could be sounded by any one outside the palace gate, by means of a stout rope staked to the ground. Whenever this alarum of justice was sounded in the King's ear, he sent a trusty messenger to conduct the complainant into his presence.

"One day, upon the bell being violently rung, the messenger was commanded to bring in the person requiring justice. When the messenger reached the gate, he found no other creature near the place but a poor sickly-looking ass, in search of a scanty meal from the stunted grass, which was dried up by the scorching sun, and

blasts of hot wind which at that season prevailed. The man returned and reported to the King that there was no person at the gate.

"The King was much surprised at the singularity of the circumstance, and whilst he was talking of the subject with his nobles and courtiers, the bell was again rung with increased violence. The messenger being a second time despatched, returned with the same answer, assuring the King that there was not any person at or within sight of the gate. The King, suspecting him to be a perverter of justice, was displeased with the man, and even accused him of keeping back a complainant from interested motives. It was in vain the messenger declared himself innocent of so foul a crime; a third time the bell rang, 'Go,' said the King to his attendants, 'and bring the supplicant into my presence immediately!' The men went, and on their return informed the King that the only living creature near the gate was an ass, poor and manged, seeking a scanty meal from the parched blades of grass. 'Then let the ass be brought hither!' said the King;

'perhaps *he* may have some complaint to prefer against his owner.'

"The courtiers smiled when the ass was brought into the presence of the monarch, who upon seeing the poor half-starved beast covered with sores, was at no loss for a solution of the mysterious ringing at the bell, for the animal not finding a tree or post against which he could rub himself, had made use of the bell-rope for that purpose.

"'Enquire for the owner of the ass!' commanded the King, 'and let him be brought before me without delay!' The order promptly given, was as readily obeyed; and the hurkaarahs (messengers, or running footmen), in a short time introduced a poor Dhobhie (washerman) who had owned the ass from a foal. The plaintiff and defendant were then placed side by side before the throne, when the King demanded, 'Why the sick ass was cast out to provide for itself a precarious subsistence?' The Dhobhie replied, 'In truth, O Jahaun-punah! (Protector or Ruler of the World), because he is grown old and unserviceable, afflicted with mange, and

being no longer able 'to convey my loads of linen to the river, I gave him his liberty.'

" ' Friend,' said the King, ' when this thine ass, was young and healthy, strong and lusty, didst thou not derive benefits from his services? Now that he is old, and unable from sickness to render thee further benefits, thou hast cast him from thy protection, and sent him adrift on the wide world; gratitude should have moved thee to succour and feed so old and faithful a servant, rather than forsake him in his infirmities. Thou hast dealt unjustly with this thy creature; but, mark me, I hold thee responsible to repair the injury thou hast done the ass. Take him to thy home, and at the end of forty days attend again at this place, accompanied by the ass, and compensate to the best of thy power, by kind treatment, for the injury thou hast done him by thy late hard-hearted conduct.'

"The Dhobhie, glad to escape so well, went away leading the ass to his home, fed him with well-soaked gram (grain in general use for cattle), and nicely-picked grass, sheltered

him from the burning sun, poured healing oil into his wounds, and covered his back to keep off the flies; once a day he bathed him in the river. In short, such expedients were resorted to for the comfort and relief of the ass, as were ultimately attended with the happiest effects.

"At the expiration of the forty days, the Dhobhie set off from his home to the palace, leading his now lively ass by a cord. On the road the passers-by were filled with amazement and mirth, at the manners and expressions of the Dhobhie towards his led ass. 'Come along, brother!—Make haste, son!—Let us be quick, father!—Take care, uncle!'

"'What means the old fool?' was asked by some; 'does he make his ass a relation?'—'In truth,' replied the Dhobhie, 'my ass is a very dear old friend, and what is more, he has been a greater expense to me than all my relations latterly: believe me, it has cost me much care and pains to bring this ass into his present excellent condition.' Then relating the orders of the King, and his own subsequent treatment of the beast, the people no longer wondered

at the simple Dhobhie's expressions which had prompted them at first to believe he was mad.

"The King, it is related, received the Dhobhie graciously, and commended and rewarded him for his careful attention to the animal; which in his improved condition became more useful to his master than he had ever been, through the King's determination to enforce justice even to the brute creation."

The second anecdote, translated for me by the same kind hand, is often related, with numerous embellishments, under the title of "Khareem Zund."

"Khareem Zund ruled in Persia. One day he was seated in the verandah of his palace smoking his hookha, and, at the same time, as was his frequent practice, overlooking the improvements carried on by masons and labourers, under the superintendance of a trusty servant. One of the labourers, who was also named Khareem, had toiled long, and sought to refresh himself with a pipe. The overseer of the work, seeing the poor man thus engaged, approached him in great wrath, rated him severely for his

presumption in smoking whilst he stood in the presence of his sovereign, and striking him severely with a stick, snatched the pipe from the labourer and threw it away. The poor wretch cared not for the weight of the blow so much as for the loss of his pipe: his heart was oppressed with the weight of his sorrows, and raising his eyes to Heaven he cried aloud, 'Allah Khareem!' (God is merciful!) then lowering his eyes, his glance rested on the King, 'App Khareem!' (thou art named merciful!) from whom withdrawing his eyes slowly he looked at his own mean body, and added, 'Myn Khareem!' (I am called merciful!)

"The King, who had heard the labourer's words, and witnessed with emotion the impressive manner of lifting his eyes to Heaven, had also seen the severity of the overseer to the unoffending labourer; he therefore commanded that the man should be brought into his presence without delay, who went trembling, and full of fear that his speech had drawn some heavy punishment on his head.

"'Sit down,' said the King. — 'My sove-

reign pardon his slave!' replied the labourer.—'I do not jest; it is my pleasure that you sit down,' repeated the King; and when he saw his humble guest seated, he ordered his own silver hookha to be brought and placed before the poor man, who hesitated to accept the gracious offer; but the King assured him in the kindest manner possible it was his wish and his command. The labourer enjoyed the luxury of a good hookha, and by the condescending behaviour of the King his composure gradually returned.

"This King, who it would seem delighted in every opportunity that offered of imparting pleasure and comfort to his subjects of all ranks and degrees, seeing the labourer had finished his second chillum (contents of a pipe) told him he had permission to depart, and desired him to take the hookha and keep it for his sake. 'Alas, my King!' said the labourer, 'this costly silver pipe will soon be stolen from me; my mud hut cannot safely retain so valuable a gift; the poor mazoor inhabits but a chupha (or coarse grass-roofed) hut.'—'Then take ma-

terials from my store-houses to build a house suited to your hookha,' was the order he received from the King; 'and let it be promptly done! I design to make you one of my overseers; for *you*, Khareem, have been the instrument to rouse *me* to be Khareem (merciful); and I can now approach Allah with increased confidence, Who is the only true Khareem!' "

LETTER XXI.

Natural Productions of India.—Trees, shrubs, plants, fruits, &c.—Their different uses and medicinal qualities.—The Rose.—Native medical practice.—Antidote to Hydrophobia.—Remedy for the venom of the Snake.—The Chitcherah (Inverted thorn).—The Neam-tree.—The Hurrundh (Castor-tree).—The Umultass (Cassia-tree).—The Myrtle.—The Pomegranate.—The Tamarind.—The Jahmun.—The Mango.—The Sherrefah.—White and red Guavers.—The Damascus Fig.—The Peach, and other Fruits.—The Mahdhaar (Fire-plant).—The Sirrakee and Sainturh (Jungle-grass).—The Bamboo, and its various uses enumerated.

In Europe we are accustomed to cultivate the rose merely as an ornament of the garden. This is not the case with my Indian acquaintance; they cultivate the rose as a useful article, essential to their health, and conducive to their comfort.

The only rose I have ever seen them solicitous about is the old-fashioned "hundred-

leaf" or "cabbage-rose." Wherever a Mussulmaun population congregate these are found planted in enclosed fields. In the month of September, the rose trees are cut down to within eight inches of the surface of the earth, and the cuttings carefully planted in a sheltered situation for striking, to keep up a succession of young trees. By the first or second week in December the earliest roses of the season are in bloom on the new wood, which has made its way from the old stock in this short period. Great care is taken in gathering the roses to preserve every bud for a succession. A gardener in India is distressed when the Beeby Sahibs (English ladies), pluck roses, aware that buds and all are sacrificed at once. I shall here give a brief account of the several purposes to which the rose is applied.

Rose-water is distilled in most Mussulmaun families as a medicine and an indispensable luxury. For medicine, it is administered in all cases of indigestion and pains of the stomach or bowels,—the older the rose-water the more effectual the remedy. I have been accustomed

to see very old rose-water administered in doses of a wine-glass full, repeated frequently, in cases of cholera morbus and generally with good effect, when the patient has applied the remedy in time and due care has been observed in preventing the afflicted person from taking any other liquid until the worst symptoms have subsided. This method of treatment may not accord with the views of professional men generally; however, I only assert what I have repeatedly seen, that it has been administered to many members of my husband's family with the best possible effect. On one occasion, after eating a hearty dinner, Meer Hadjee Shaah was attacked with cholera; rose-water was administered, with a small portion of the stone called zahur morah. In his agony, he complained of great thirst, when rose-water was again handed to him, and continued at intervals of half-an-hour during the day and part of the night. In the morning, the pain and symptoms had greatly subsided; he was, notwithstanding, restrained from taking any liquid or food for more than forty-eight hours, except occasionally a little

rose-water; and when his Native doctors permitted him to receive nourishment, he was kept on very limited portions of arrow-root for several days together. At the end of about eight days (the fever having been entirely removed) chicken-broth was allowed, and at first without bread; solids, indeed, were only permitted when all fears of a relapse had ceased, and even then but partially for some time, fearing the consequences to the tender state of the bowels. Such persons as are abstemious and regard the quality of their daily food are most likely to recover from the attack of this awful scourge. Very young children are rarely amongst the sufferers by cholera; the adults of all classes are most subject to it in India; indeed, I do not find the aged or the youthful, either male or female, preponderate in the number attacked; but those who live luxuriously suffer most. Amongst the Natives, it is difficult to prevail on them to forego their usual meals, particularly amongst the lower orders: if they feel rather inconvenienced by heart-burns or other indications of a disordered stomach, they cannot

resist eating again and again at the appointed hours, after which strong symptoms of cholera usually commence. I never heard of one case occurring after a good night's rest, but invariably after eating, either in the morning or the evening.

My remarks have drawn me from my subject, by explaining the supposed medicinal benefits of rose-water, which as a luxury is highly valued in India. It is frequently used by the Natives in preparing their sweet dishes, is added to their sherbet, sprinkled over favoured guests, used to cleanse the mouth-piece of the hookha, and to cool the face and hands in very hot weather. Although they abstain from the use of rose-water, externally and internally, when suffering from a cold,—they fancy smelling a rose will produce a cold, and I have often observed in India, that smelling a fresh rose induces sneezing,—yet, at all other times, this article is in general use in respectable Mussulmaun families. Dried rose-leaves and cassia added to infusions of senna, is a family medicine in general request.

The fresh rose-leaves are converted by a very simple process into a conserve, which is also used as a medicine; it is likewise an essential article, with other ingredients, in the preparation of tobacco for their luxurious hookha.

A syrup is extracted from the fresh rose, suited admirably to the climate of India as an aperient medicine, pleasant to the taste and mild in its effects. A table-spoon full is considered a sufficient dose for adults.

The seed of the rose is a powerful astringent, and often brought into use in cases of extreme weakness of the bowels. The green leaves are frequently applied pounded as a cold poultice to inflamed places with much the same effect as is produced in England from golard-water.

The oil or otta of roses is collected from the rose-water when first distilled. Persons intending to procure the otta, have the rose-water poured into dishes while warm from the still: this remains undisturbed twenty-four hours, when the oily substance is discovered on the surface as cream on milk; this is carefully taken

off, bottled, the mouth closed with wax, and then exposed to the burning rays of the sun for several days. The rose-water is kept in thin white glass bottles, and placed in baskets for a fortnight, either on the roofs of houses or on a grass-plot; or wherever the sun by day and the dew by night may be calculated on, which act on the rose-water and induce that fragrant smell so peculiar to that of India.

I have elsewhere remarked that the Native medical practice, is strictly herbal; minerals are strongly objected to as pernicious in after consequences, although they may prove effectual in removing present inconvenience. Quicksilver is sometimes resorted to by individuals, but without the sanction of their medical practitioners. They have no notion of the anatomy of the human body, beyond a few ideas suggested in the old Grecian school of medicine, in favour of which they are strongly prejudiced. They, however, are said to perform extraordinary cures by simple treatment; many cases of severe fever occurred under my own observation,

which were removed, I really believe, by strict attention to diet, or rather starving the enemy from its strong hold, than by any of the medicines administered to the patients. If any one is attacked by fever, his medical adviser inquires the day and the hour it commenced, by which he is guided in prescribing for the patient. On the borehaun (critical days) as the third, fifth, and seventh, after the fever commences, nothing could induce the medical doctor to let blood or administer active medicines; there only remains then for the patient to be debarred any kind of food or nourishment, and that duly observed, the fever is often thrown off without a single dose of medicine. By three or four days of most strict abstinence, and such simple nourishment as the thinest gruel or barley water,—the latter made from the common field barley,—very sparingly allowed, the patient is rendered convalescent.

The Natives of India profess to have found an antidote to, and cure for, hydrophobia in the reetah berry, described as a soponaceous nut.

I have never seen a case of hydrophobia, but it is by no means uncommon, I understand. They always advise that the person bitten by a rabid animal, should have the limb promptly tied up with a bandage above and below the bite; the wound, as speedily as possible, to be seared with a red-hot iron, and a few doses of the reetah berry with a portion of soap administered. The berry is well known for its good property in cleansing and softening the hair, for which purpose it is generally found in the bathing-rooms both of the European and Native ladies.

The Native remedy for snake bites, is called neellah tootee (blue vitrol): if from eight to twelve grains be administered in ghee or butter immediately after the bite is received, the happiest results will follow. A person in our family was bitten by a snake, but neglected to apply for the remedy for more than half an hour after the accident, when his own expressions were, that "he suffered great uneasiness in his body, and his faculties seemed darkened;" half a masha, about eight grains of blue stone, was now given in ghee. In a few hours he was

apparently quite well again, and for several days he found no other inconvenience than a slight numbness in the hand which had been bitten by the snake.

This person had occasion soon after to leave home, and had exerted himself unusually by walking, when he found the same symptoms of uneasiness return; he hurried to a house where he was known, and requested to be supplied with a certain quantity of blue stone without delay. He had sense enough remaining to explain for what purpose he required it, when the person applied to objected to furnish him with the poisonous article. The remedy, however, was ultimately procured, taken, and in a few hours he was recovered sufficiently to return home. He never found the symptoms return again to my recollection.

The chitcherah (inverted thorn), is a shrub common to India, which bears small grains not unlike rice; these seeds are poisonous in their natural state, but when properly prepared with a portion of urzeez (tin,) it becomes a useful medicine; and in particular cases of scrofula,

which have resisted all other remedies offered by the medical practitioners, the Natives tell me this has proved an effectual remedy; and my informant, a Native doctor, assures me that three doses, of three grains each, is all he finds necessary to give his patient in scrofula cases.

The chitcherah in its green state is resorted to as a remedy for the sting of scorpions: when applied to the wound, which is often much inflamed and very painful, the cure is prompt. The scorpion runs from this shrub when held to it, as if it were frightened: many people declare scorpions are never met with in the grounds where the chitcherah grows.

The neam-tree is cultivated near the houses of Natives generally, in the Upper Provinces, because, as they affirm, it is very conducive to health, to breathe the air through the neam-trees. This tree is not very quick of growth, but reaches a good size. When it has attained its full height, the branches spread out as luxuriantly as the oak and supplies an agreeable shelter from the sun. The bark is rough; the leaves long, narrow, curved, pointed, and

with saw teeth edges; both the wood and leaves partake of the same disagreeable bitter flavour. The green leaves are used medicinally as a remedy for biles; after being pounded they are mixed with water and taken as a draught; they are also esteemed efficacious as poultices and fomentations for tumours, &c. The young twigs are preferred by all classes of the Natives for tooth-brushes.

The hurrundh, or castor-tree, is cultivated by farmers in their corn-fields throughout Hindoostaun. This tree seldom exceeds in its growth the height of an English shrub. The bark is smooth; the leaf, in shape, resembles the sycamore, but of a darker green. The pods containing the seed grow in clusters like grapes, but of a very different appearance, the surface of each pod being rough, thorny, and of a dingy red cast when ripe. The seed produces the oil, which is in common use as a powerful medicine, for men and animals. In remote stations, where any difficulty exists in procuring cocoanut oil, the castor oil is often rendered useful for burning in lamps; the light, however, pro-

duced by it is very inferior to the oil of cocoa-nut. The green leaves are considered cooling to wounds or inflamed places, and therefore used with ointment after the blister-plaster is removed.

As I have seen this tree growing in corn-fields, I may here remark that the farmer's motives for cultivating it originate in the idea that his crops are benefited by a near vicinity to the hurrundh. It is also very common to observe a good row of the plant called ulsee (linseed), bordering a plantation of wheat or barley: they fancy this herb preserves the blade healthy, and the corn from blight.

The umultass (cassia) is a large and handsome forest tree, producing that most useful drug in long dark pods, several inches long, which hang from the branches in all directions, giving a most extraordinary appearance to the tree. The seed is small and mixed with the pulp, which dissolves in water, and is in general use with the Natives as a powerful and active medicine in bilious cases. I am not, however, aware that the seed possesses any medicinal property: it

certainly is not appropriated to such uses in Hindoostaun.

Myrtle-trees, under many different names, and of several kinds, are met with in India, of an immense size compared with those grown in Europe. They are cultivated for their known properties, rather than as mere ornaments to the garden. The leaves, boiled in water, are said to be of service to the hair: the root and and branches are considered medicinal.

The pomegranate-tree may be ranked amongst the choicest beauties of Asiatic horticulture; and when its benefits are understood, no one wonders that a tree or two is to be seen in almost every garden and compound of the Mussulmaun population in India.

The finest fruit of this sort is brought, however, from Persia and Cabul, at a great expense; and from the general estimation in which it is held, the merchants annually import the fruit in large quantities. There are two sorts, the sweet and the acid pomegranate, each possessing medicinal properties peculiar to itself. Sherbet is made from the juice, which

is pressed out, and boiled up with sugar or honey to a syrup; thus prepared it keeps good for any length of time, and very few families omit making their yearly supply, as it constitutes a great luxury in health, and a real benefit in particular disorders. The Natives make many varieties of sherbet from the juices of their fruits, as the pine-apple, falsah, mango, or any other of the same succulent nature, each having properties to recommend it beyond the mere pleasantness of its flavour.

An admirer of Nature must be struck with the singular beauty of the pomegranate-tree, so commonly cultivated in India. The leaves are of a rich dark green, very glossy, and adorned at the same time with every variety of bud, bloom, and fruit, in the several stages of vegetation, from the first bud to the ripe fruit in rich luxuriance, and this in succession nearly throughout the year. The bright scarlet colour of the buds and blossoms seldom vary in their shades; but contrasted with the glossy dark green foliage, the effect excites wonder and admiration. There is a medicinal benefit to be derived from every part of this tree from its

root upwards, each part possessing a distinct property, which is employed according to the Native knowledge and practice of medicine. Even the falling blossoms are carefully collected, and when made into a conserve, are administered successfully in cases of blood-spitting.

The tamarind-tree may often be discovered sheltering the tomb of revered or sainted characters; but I am not aware of any particular veneration entertained towards this tree by the general population of India, beyond the benefit derived from the medicinal properties of the fruit and the leaves.

The ripe fruit, soaked in salt and water, to extract the juices, is strained, and administered as a useful aperient; and from its quality in cleansing the blood, many families prefer this fruit in their curries to other acids. From the tamarind-tree, preserves are made for the affluent, and chatnee for the poor, to season their coarse barley unleavened cakes, which form their daily meal, and with which they seem thoroughly contented.

From what cause I know not, but it is gene-

rally understood that vegetation does not thrive in the vicinity of the tamarind-tree. Indeed, I have frequently heard the Natives account for the tamarind being so often planted apart from other trees, because they fancy vegetation is always retarded in their vicinity.

The jahmun-tree is also held in general estimation for the benefit of the fruit, which, when ripe, is eaten with salt, and esteemed a great luxury, and in every respect preferable to olives. The fruit, in its raw state, is a powerful astringent, and possesses many properties not generally known out of Native society, which may excuse my mentioning them here. The fruit, which is about the size and colour of the damson-plum, when ripe is very juicy, and makes an excellent wine, not inferior in quality to port. The Natives, however, are not permitted by their law to drink wine, and therefore this property in the fruit is of no benefit to them; but they encourage the practice of extracting the juice of jahmun for vinegar, which is believed to be the most powerful of all vegetable acids. The Native medical practitioners de-

clare, that if by accident a hair has been introduced with food into the stomach, it can never digest of itself, and will produce both pain and nausea to the individual. On such occasions they administer jahmun vinegar, which has the property of dissolving any kind of hair, and the only thing they are aware of that will. Sherbet is made of this vinegar, and is often taken in water either immediately after dinner, or when digestion is tardy.

The skin of the jahmun produces a permanent dye of a bright lilac colour, and with the addition of uzzeez (tin,) a rich violet. The effect on wool I have never tried, but on silks and muslins the most beautiful shades have been produced by the simplest process possible, and so permanent, that the colour resisted every attempt to remove it by washing, &c.

The mango-tree stands pre-eminently high in the estimation of the Natives, and this is not to be wondered at when the various benefits derived from it are brought under consideration. It is magnificent in its growth, and splendid in its foliage, and where a plantation of mango-

trees, called "a tope," is met with, that spot is preferred by travellers on which to pitch their tent. The season of blooming is about February and March; the aromatic scent from the flowers is delightful, and the beautiful clustering of the blossoms is not very unlike the horse-chesnut in appearance and size, but branching horizontally. The young mangoes are gathered for preserves and pickles before the stone is formed; the full-grown unripe fruit is peeled, split, and dried, for seasoning curries, &c. The ripe fruit spoken of in a former Letter requires no further commendation, neither will it admit of comparison with any European fruits. The kernels, when ripe, are often dried and ground into flour for bread in seasons of scarcity. The wood is useful as timber for doors, rafters, &c., and the branches and leaves for fuel; in short, there is no part of the whole tree but is made useful in some way to man.

The sherrefah (custard-apple) is produced on a very graceful tree, not, however, of any

great size; the blossom nearly resembles that of the orange in colour and shape; the fruit ripens in the hottest months, and similar in flavour to well-made custards. The skin is of a dusky pea-green rough surface, in regular compartments; each division or part containing a glossy black seed covered with the custard. This seed is of some utility amongst the lower order of Natives who have occasion to rid themselves of vermin at the expense of little labour; the seed is pounded fine and when mixed in the hair destroys the living plague almost instantly. The same article is often used with a hair-pencil to remove a cataract of the eye, (they have no idea of surgical operations on the eye). There is one thing worthy of remark in this tree and its fruit, that flies are never known to settle on either; ants of every description feed on the fruit without injury, so that it cannot be imagined there is any thing poisonous to insects, generally, in the quality of the fruit; yet, certain it is, the sherrefah is equally obnoxious to flies as the seed is destructive to

vermin. The leaves and tender twigs are considered detrimental to health, if not actually poisonous to cattle.

The guaver, white and red, are produced in the Upper Provinces; but the fruit is seldom so fine as in the Bengal district. The strong aromatic smell and flavour of this fruit is not agreeable to all tastes; in size and shape it resembles the quince.

The Damascus fig ripens well, and the fruit is superior to any I have met with in other countries. The indigenous fig-tree of Hindoostaun is one of the objects of Hindoo veneration. It has always been described to me by those Natives, as the sacred burbut,—why? they could not explain. The fruit is very inferior.

The peach is cultivated in many varieties, and every new introduction repays the careful gardener's skill by a rich and beautiful produce. They have a flat peach, with a small round kernel (a native of China), the flavour of which is delicious, and the tree prolific.

I may here remark, that all those trees we

are accustomed in Europe to designate wall-fruit, are in India pruned for standards. The only fruit allowed to trail on frames is the vine, of which they have many choice varieties; one in particular, of late introduction from Persia, has the remarkable peculiarity of being seedless, called "Ba daanah" (without seeds); the fruit is purple, round, and sweet as honey.

Peach, nectarine, and apricot trees, are cut down early in February, much in the same way as willows are docked in England: the new wood grows rapidly, and the fruit is ready for the table in the month of June. A tree neglected to be pruned in this way annually, would the first year yield but little, and that indifferent fruit, the tree become unhealthy, and, in most cases, never again restored to its former vigour.

Apple-trees are found chiefly in the gardens of Europeans; they are not perhaps as yet understood by Native gardeners, or it may be the climate is not favourable to them; certain it is, that the apples produced in Hindoostaun are not to be compared with those of other

countries. Singular as it may seem, yet I have never met with more than one species of apple in my visits to the gardens of India. I have often fancied a fresh importation of English apple-trees would be worth the trouble of the transfer.

The apple-trees grow tall and slender, the blossoms break out on the top of each branch in a cluster; the fruit, when ripe, is about the size of small crabs, and shaped like golden-pippins, without any acidity, but the sweetness rather resembles turnips than the well-flavoured apple. In the bazaars are to be met with, what is called apple-preserve, which, however, is often a deception,—turnips substituted for apples.

Mulberries are indigenous, and of several varieties. The Native gardeners, however, take so little pains to assist or improve the operations of Nature, that the mulberry here is seldom so fine as in other countries. The common sort is produced on an immense tree with small leaves; the berry is long, and when ripe, of a yellow-green, very much resembling caterpillars in colour and form.

Plum-trees would thrive in Hindoostaun if introduced and cultivated, since the few, chiefly the bullace-plum, I have seen, produce tolerably good fruit.

Cherries, I have never observed; they are known, however, by the name of "glass" to the travelling Natives, who describe them as common to Cashmire, Cabul, and Persia.

Gooseberries and currants are not known in India, but they have many good substitutes in the falsah, American sorrel, puppayah, and a great variety of Chinese fruits—all of which make excellent tarts, preserves, and jellies. Strawberries and raspberries repay their cultivation in the Upper Provinces: they thrive well with proper care and attention.

The melon I have described elsewhere as an indigenous fruit greatly valued by the Natives, who cultivate the plant in the open fields without much trouble, and with very little expense; the varieties are countless, and every year adds to the number amongst the curious, who pride themselves on novelty in this article of general estimation.

The pine-apple requires very little pains to produce, and little demand on art in bringing it to perfection. The Bengal climate, however, suits it better than the dry soil of the Upper Provinces. I have frequently heard a superstitious objection urged by the Natives against this fruit being planted in their regular gardens; they fancy prosperity is checked by its introduction, or to use their own words,—"It is unfortunate to the proprietor of the garden."

There is a beautiful shrub, called by the Natives, mahdhaar, or arg,—literally, fire-plant, —met with in the Upper Provinces of India, inhabiting every wild spot where the soil is sandy, as generally as the thistle on neglected grounds in England.

The mahdhaar-plant seldom exceeds four feet in height, the branches spread out widely the leaves are thick, round, and broad; the blossom resembles our dark auricula. When the seed is ripe, the pod presents a real treat to the lover of Nature. The mahdhaar pod may be designated a vegetable bag of pure white silk, about the size of large walnuts. The skin

or bag being removed, flat seeds are discovered in layers over each other, resembling scales of fish; to each seed is affixed very fine white silk, about two inches long; this silk is defended from the air by the seed; the texture greatly resembles the silky hair of the Cashmire goat. I once had the mahdhaar silk collected, spun, and wove, merely as an experiment, which answered my full expectation: the article thus produced might readily be mistaken for the shawl stuff of Cashmire.

The stalks of mahdhaar, when broken, pour out a milky juice at all seasons of the year, which falling on the skin produces blisters. The Natives bring this juice into use both for medicine and alchymy in a variety of ways.

The mahdhaar, as a remedy for asthma, is in great repute with the Natives; it is prepared in the following way:—The plants are collected, root, stalks, and leaves, and well dried by exposure to the sun; they are then burnt on iron plates, and the ashes thrown into a pan of water, where they remain for some days, until the water has imbibed the saline particles; it

is then boiled in an iron vessel, until the moisture is entirely absorbed, and the salt only left at the bottom. The salt is administered in half-grain doses at the first, and increasing the quantity when the patient has become accustomed to its influence: it would be dangerous to add to the quantity suddenly.

Another efficient remedy, both for asthma and obstinate continuance of a cough, is found in the salt extracted from tobacco-leaves, by a similar process, which is administered with the like precaution, and in the same quantities.

The sirrakee and sainturh are two specimens of one genus of jungle-grass, the roots of which are called secundah, or khus-khus, and are collected on account of their aromatic smell, to form thatch tatties, or screens for the doors and windows; which being kept constantly watered, the strong wind rushing through the wet khus-khus is rendered agreeably cool, and produces a real luxury at the season of the hot winds, when every puff resembles a furnace-heat to those exposed to it by out-of-door occupation.

This grass presents so many proofs of the beneficent care of Divine Providence to the creatures of His hand, that the heart must be ungratefully cold which neglects praise and thanksgiving to the Creator, whose power and mercy bestows so great a benefit. The same might be justly urged against our insensibility, if the meanest herb or weed could speak to our hearts, each possessing, as it surely does, in its nature a beneficial property peculiar to itself. But here the blessing is brought home to every considerate mind, since a substitute for this article does not appear to exist in India.

I have seen the sainturh stalks, on which the bloom gracefully moves as feathers, sixteen feet high. The sirrakee has a more delicate blossom, finer stalk, and seldom, I believe, exceeds ten feet; the stalk resembles a reed, full of pith, without a single joint from the shoot upwards; the colour is that of clean wheat straw, but even more glossy. The blossom is of a silky nature possessing every variety of shade, from pure white to the rainbow's tints, as viewed in the distance at sunrise; and

when plucked the separated blossoms have many varieties of hue from brown and yellow, to purple.

The head or blossom is too light to weigh down the firm but flexible stalk; but as the wind presses against each patch of grass, it is moved in a mass, and returns to its erect position with a dignity and grace not to be described.

I have watched for the approaching season of the blooming sirrakee with an anxiety almost childish; my attention never tired with observing the progressive advances from the first show of blossom, to the period of its arriving at full perfection; at which time, the rude sickle of the industrious labourer levels the majestic grass to the earth for domestic purposes. The benefits it then produces would take me very long to describe.

The sirrakee and sainturh are stripped from the outward sheltering blades, and wove together at the ends; in this way they are used for bordering tatties, or thatched roofs; sometimes they are formed into screens for doors,

others line their mud-huts with them. They are found useful in constructing accommodations after the manner of bulk-heads on boats for the river voyagers, and make a good covering for loaded waggons. For most of these purposes the article is well suited, as it resists moisture and swells as the wet falls on it, so that the heaviest rain may descend on a frame of sirrakee without one drop penetrating, if it be properly placed in a slanting position.

I cannot afford space to enumerate here the variety of purposes to which this production of Nature is both adapted for and appropriated to; every part of the grass being carefully stored by the thrifty husbandman, even to the tops of the reed, which, when the blossom is rubbed off, is rendered serviceable, and proves an excellent substitute for that useful invention, a birch-broom. The coarse parent grass, which shelters the sirrakee, is the only article yet found to answer the purposes for thatching the bungalows of the rich, the huts of the poor, the sheds for cattle, and roofs for boats. The religious devotee sets up a chupha-hut, without

expense,—(all the house he requires,)—on any waste spot of land most convenient to himself, away from the busy haunts of the tumultuous world, since bamboo and grass are the common property of all who choose to take the trouble of gathering it from the wilderness. And here neither rent or taxes are levied on the inhabitant, who thus appropriates to himself a home from the bounteous provision prepared by Divine goodness for the children of Nature.

This grass is spontaneous in its growth, neither receiving or requiring aid from human cultivation. It is found in every waste throughout Hindoostaun, and is the prominent feature of the jungle, into which the wild animals usually resort for shelter from the heat of the day, or make their covert when pursued by man, their natural enemy.

The beneficence of Heaven has also exacted but little labour from the husbandman of India in procuring his daily provision. Indeed the actual wants of the lower order of Natives are few, compared with those of the same class in England; exertion has not, therefore, been called forth by necessity in a climate which

induces habits of indulgence, ease, and quiet; where, however it may have surprised me at first, that I found not one single Native disposed to delight in the neat ordering of a flower-garden, I have since ascertained it is from their unwillingness to labour without a stronger motive than the mere gratification of taste. Hence the uncultivated ground surrounding the cottages in India, which must naturally strike the mind of strangers with mingled feelings of pity and regret, when comparing the cottages of the English peasantry with those of the same classes of people in Hindoostaun.

The bamboo presents to the admirer of Nature no common specimen of her beautiful productions; and to the contemplating mind a wide field for wonder, praise, and gratitude. The graceful movements of a whole forest of these slender trees surpass all description; they must be witnessed in their uncultivated ground, as I have seen them, to be thoroughly understood or appreciated, for I do not recollect wood scenery in any other place that could convey the idea of a forest of bamboo.

The bamboos are seen in clusters, striking

from the parent root by suckers, perhaps from fifty to a hundred in a patch, of all sizes; the tallest in many instances exceed sixty feet, with slender branches, and leaves in pairs, which are long, narrow, and pointed. The body of each bamboo is hollow and jointed, in a similar way to wheat stalks, with bands or knots, by which wonderful contrivance both are rendered strong and flexible, suited to the several designs of creative Wisdom. The bamboo imperceptibly tapers from the earth upwards. It is the variety of sizes in each cluster, however, which gives grace and beauty to the whole as they move with every breath of air, or are swayed by the strong wind.

Where space allows the experiment, the tallest bamboo may be brought down to a level with the earth, without snapping asunder. In the strong tempest the supple bamboo may be seen to bow submissively, — as the self-subdued and pliant mind in affliction,—and again rear its head uninjured by the storm, as the righteous man "preserved by faith" revives after each trial, or temptation.

The wood of the bamboo is hard, yet light, and possesses a fine grain, though fibrous. The outward surface is smooth and highly polished by Nature, and the knot very difficult to penetrate by any other means than a saw. The twigs or branches are covered with sharp thorns, in all probability a natural provision to defend the young trees from herbaceous animals. I have heard of the bamboo blossoming when arrived at full age; this I have, however, never seen, and cannot therefore presume to describe.

In the hollow divisions of the bamboo is found, in small quantities, a pure white tasteless substance, called tawurshear, which as a medicine is in great request with the Native doctors, who administer it as a sovereign remedy for lowness of spirits, and every disease of the heart, such as palpitations, &c. The tawurshear when used medicinally is pounded fine, and mixed up with gold and silver leaf, preserved quinces and apples, and the syrup of pomegranates, which is simmered over a slow fire until it becomes of the consistence

of jam. It is taken before meals by the patient.

The bamboo is rendered serviceable to man in a countless variety of ways, both for use and ornament. The chuphas (thatched-roofs) of huts, cottages, or bungalows, are all constructed on frames of bamboo, to which each layer of grass is firmly fixed by laths formed of the same wood.

The only doors in poor people's habitations are contrived from the same materials as the roof: viz., grass on bamboo frames, just sufficient to secure privacy and defend the inmates from cold air, or the nightly incursions of wolves and jackals. For the warm weather, screens are invented of split bamboos, either fine or coarse, as circumstances permit, to answer the purpose of doors, both for the rich and poor, whenever the house is so situated that these intruders may be anticipated at night.

The bamboo is made useful also in the kitchen as bellows by the aid of the cook's breath; in the stable, to administer medicine to horses; and to the poor traveller, as a deposit for his oil,

either for cooking or his lamp. To the boat-man as sculls, masts, yards, and poles; besides affording him a covering to his boat, which could not be constructed with any other wood equally answering the same varied purpose of durability and lightness.

The carriers (generally of the bearer caste) by the help of a split bamboo over the shoulder, convey heavy loads suspended by cords at each end, from one part of India to the other, many hundred miles distant. No other wood could answer this purpose so well; the bamboo being remarkably light and of a very pliant nature lessens the fatigue to the bearer, whilst almost any wood sufficiently strong to bear the packages would fret the man's shoulder and add burden to burden. The bearers do not like to carry more than twelve seer (twenty-four pounds) slung by ropes at each end of their bamboo for any great distance; but, I fear, they are not always allowed the privilege of thinking for themselves in these matters.

When a hackery (sort of waggon) is about to be loaded with bags of corn or goods, a

railing is formed by means of bamboos to admit the luggage; thus rendering the waggon itself much lighter than if built of solid wood, an object of some moment, when considering the smallness of the cattle used for draught, oxen of a small breed being in general use for waggons, carts, ploughs, &c. I have never seen horses harnessed to any vehicle in India, except to such gentlemen's carriages as are built on the English principle.

The Native carriages of ladies and travellers are indebted to the bamboo for all the wood used in the construction of the body, which is merely a frame covered with cloth, shaped in several different ways,—some square, others double cones, &c.

Baskets of every shape and size, coarse or fine, are made of the split bamboo; covers for dinner trays, on which the food is sent from the kitchen to the hall; cheese-presses, punkahs, and screens, ingeniously contrived in great varieties; netting-needles and pins, latches and bolts for doors; skewers and spits; umbrella

sticks, and walking canes; toys in countless ways, and frames for needle-work.

A long line of etceteras might here be added as to the number of good purposes to which the bamboo is adapted and appropriated in Native economy; I must not omit that even the writing-paper on which I first practised the Persian character was manufactured from the bamboo, which is esteemed more durable, but not so smooth as their paper made from cotton. The young shoots of bamboo are both pickled and preserved by the Natives, and esteemed a great luxury when produced at meals with savoury pillaus, &c.

I am told, a whole forest of bamboo has sometimes been consumed by fire, ignited by their own friction in a heavy storm, and the blaze fanned by the opposing wind; the devouring element, under such circumstances, could be stayed only when there ceased to be a tree to feed the flame.

LETTER XXII.

Monkeys.—Hindoo opinions of their Nature.—Instances of their sagacity.—Rooted animosity of the Monkey tribe to the snake.—Cruelty to each other when maimed.—The female remarkable for affection to its young.—Anecdotes descriptive of the belief of the Natives in the Monkey being endowed with reason.—The Monkeys and the Alligator.—The Traveller and the Monkeys.—The Hindoo and the Monkey.

THE Natives of India, more particularly the Hindoos, are accustomed to pay particular attention to the habits of the varied monkey race, conceiving them to be connecting links in the order of Nature between brutes and rational creatures; or, as some imagine and assert, (without any other foundation than conjecture and fancy), that they were originally a race of human beings, who for their wicked deeds

have been doomed to perpetuate their disgrace and punishment to the end of time in the form and manner we see them, inhabiting forests, and separated from their superior man.

I have had very few opportunities of acquainting myself with the general principles of the Hindoo belief, but I am told, there are amongst them those who assert that one of their deities was transformed to a particular kind of monkey, since designated Hummoomaun, after the object of their adoration; whence arises the marked veneration paid by Hindoos of certain sects to this class of monkeys.

The Natives firmly believe the whole monkey race to be gifted with reason to a certain extent, never accounting for the sagacity and cunning they are known to possess by instinctive habits; arguing from their own observations, that the monkeys are peaceable neighbours, or inveterate enemies to man; in proportion as their good will is cultivated by kindness and hospitality, or their propensity to revenge roused by an opposite line of conduct towards them.

The husbandman, whose land is in the vici-

nity of a forest, and the abode of monkeys, secures safety to his crops, by planting a patch of ground with that species of grain which these animals are known to prefer. Here they assemble, as appetite calls, and feast themselves upon their own allotment; and, as if they appreciated the hospitality of the landlord, not a blade is broken, or a seed destroyed in the fields of corn to the right and left of their plantation. But woe to the farmer who neglects this provision; his fields will not only be visited by the marauders, but their vengeance will be displayed in the wasteful destruction of his cultivation. This undoubtedly looks more like reason than instinct; and if credit could be given to half the extraordinary tales that are told of them, the monkeys of India might justly be entitled to a higher claim than that of instinct for their actions.

Monkeys seem to be aware that snakes are their natural enemies. They never advance in pursuit of, yet they rarely run from a snake: unless its size renders it too formidable an object for their strength and courage to attack

with any thing like a prospect of success in destroying it. So great is the animosity of the monkey race to these reptiles, that they attack them systematically, after the following manner:—

When a snake is observed by a monkey, he depends on his remarkable agility as a safeguard from the enemy. At the most favourable opportunity he seizes the reptile just below the head with a firm grasp, then springs to a tree, if available, or to any hard substance near at hand, on which he rubs the snake's head with all his strength until life is extinct; at intervals smelling the fresh blood as it oozes from the wounds of his victim. When success has crowned his labour, the monkey capers about his prostrate enemy, as if in triumph at the victory he has won; developing, as the Natives say, in this, a striking resemblance to man.

Very few monkeys, in their wild state, ever recover from inflicted wounds; the reason assigned by those who have studied their usual habits is, that whenever a poor monkey has been wounded, even in the most trifling way,

his associates visit him by turns, when each visitor, without a single exception, is observed to scratch the wound smartly with their nails. A wound left to itself might be expected to heal in a short time, but thus irritated by a successive application of their sharp nails, it inflames and increases. Mortification is early induced by the heated atmosphere, and death rapidly follows.

The monkeys' motives for adding to their neighbour's anguish, is accounted for by some speculators on the score of their aversion to the unnatural smell of blood; or they are supposed to be actuated by a natural abhorrence to the appearance of the wound, not by any means against the wounded; since in their domestic habits, they are considered to be peaceable and affectionate in their bearings towards each other. The strong will exercise mastery over the weak where food is scarce, but, in a general way, they are by no means quarrelsome or revengeful amongst themselves. They are known to hold by each other in defending rights and privileges, if the accounts given

by credible Natives be true, who add that a whole colony of monkies have been known to issue forth in a body to revenge an injury sustained by an individual of their tribe; often firing a whole village of chupha-roofs, where the aggressor is known to be a resident, who in his anger may have maimed or chastised one of their colony.

The female monkey is remarkable for her attachment to her progeny, which she suckles until it is able to procure food for its own sustenance. When one of her young dies, the mother is observed to keep it closely encircled in her arms, moaning piteously with true maternal feelings of regret, and never parting with it from her embrace until the dead body becomes an offensive mass: and when at last she quits her hold, she lays it on the ground before her, at no great distance, watching with intense anxiety, the dead body before her, which she can no longer fold in her embrace, until the work of decomposing has altered the form of the creature that claimed her tender attachment. What an example is here given to

unnatural mothers who neglect or forsake their offspring!

I shall here insert a few anecdotes illustrative of the opinions of the Natives on the subject of monkeys being possessed of reasoning faculties. They shall be given exactly as I have received them, not expecting my readers will give to them more credit than I am disposed to yield to most of these tales; but as they are really believed to be true by the Natives who relate them, I feel bound to afford them a place in my work, which is intended rather to describe men as they are, than men as I wish to see them.

In the neighbourhood of Muttra is an immense jungle or forest, where monkeys abound in great numbers and variety. Near a village bordering this forest, is a large natural lake which is said to abound with every sort of fish and alligators. On the banks of this lake are many trees, some of which branch out a great distance over the water. On these trees monkeys of a large description, called Lungoor, gambol from spray to spray in happy amuse-

ment: sometimes they crowd in numbers on one branch, by which means their weight nearly brings the end of the bough to the surface of the water; on which occasion it is by no means unusual for one or more of their numbers to be lessened.

Whether the monkeys told their thoughts or not, my informant did not say, but the retailers of the story assert, that the oldest monkey was aware that his missing brethren had been seized by an alligator from the branch of the tree, whilst they were enjoying their amusement. This old monkey, it would seem, resolved on revenging the injury done to his tribe, and formed a plan for retaliating on the common enemy of his race.

The monkeys were observed by the villagers, for many successive days, actively occupied in collecting the fibrous bark of certain trees, which they were converting into a thick rope. The novelty of this employment surprised the peasants and induced them to watch daily for the result. When the rope was completed, from sixty to seventy of the strongest

monkeys conveyed it to the tree: having formed a noose at one end with the nicest care, the other end was secured by them to the overhanging arm of the tree. This ready, they commenced their former gambols, jumping about and crowding on the same branch which had been so fatal to many of their brethren.

The alligator, unconscious of the stratagem thus prepared to secure him, sprang from the water as the branch descended, but instead of catching the monkey he expected, he was himself caught in the noose; and the monkeys moving away rather precipitately, the alligator was drawn considerably above the surface of the water. The more he struggled the firmer he was held by the noose; and here was his skeleton to be seen many years after, suspended from the tree over the water, until time and the changes of season released the blanched bones from their exalted situation, to consign them to their more natural element in the lake below.

On one occasion, a Hindoo traveller on his way to Muttra, from his place of residence,

drew down the resentment of the monkeys inhabiting the same forest, by his inattention to their well-known habits. The story is told as follows:—

"The man was travelling with all his worldly wealth about his person: viz., fifty gold mohurs, (each nearly equal to two pounds in value), and a few rupees, the savings of many a year's hard service, which were secreted in the folds of his turban; a good suit of clothes on his back; a few gold ornaments on his neck and arms; and a bundle of sundries and cooking vessels.

"The Hindoo was on foot, without companions, making his way towards the home of his forefathers, where he hoped with his little treasury to be able to spend his remaining years in peace with his family and friends, after many years' toil and absence from his home. He stopped near to the lake in question, after a long and fatiguing march, to rest himself beneath the shade of the trees, and cook his humble meal of bread and dhall. I ought here, perhaps to say, that this class of Natives

always cook in the open air, and, if possible, near a river, or large body of water, for the purpose of bathing before meals, and having water for purifying their cooking utensils, &c.

"The man having undressed himself, and carefully piled his wardrobe beneath the tree he had selected for shelter, went to the lake and bathed; after which he prepared his bread, and sat himself down to dine. As soon as he was comfortably seated, several large monkeys advanced and squatted themselves at a respectful distance from him, doubtless expecting to share in the good things he was enjoying. But, no: the traveller was either too hungry or inhospitable, for he finished his meal, without tendering the smallest portion to his uninvited visitors, who kept their station watching every mouthful until he had finished.

"The meal concluded, the traveller gathered his cooking vessels together and went to the bank of the lake, in order to wash them, as is customary, and to cleanse his mouth after eating; his clothes and valuables were left securely under the tree as he imagined,—if he

thought at all about them,—for he never dreamed of having offended the monkies by eating all he had cooked, without making them partakers. He was no sooner gone, however, than the monkeys assembled round his valuables; each took something from the collection; the oldest among them having secured the purse of gold, away they ran to the tree over the very spot where the man was engaged in polishing his brass vessels.

"The Hindoo had soon completed his business at the lake, and unconscious of their movements, he had returned to the tree, where to his surprise and sorrow, he discovered his loss. Nearly frantic, the Hindoo doubted not some sly thief had watched his motions and removed his treasures, when he heard certain horrid yells from the monkeys which attracted his attention: he returned hastily to the lake, and on looking up to the tree, he discovered his enemies in the monkeys. They tantalized him for some time by holding up the several articles to his view, and when the old monkey shook the bag of gold, the poor man was in an

agony; they then threw the whole into the lake, the coins, one by one, were cast into the deep water, where not a shadow of hope could be entertained of their restoration, as the lake was deep and known to be infested with alligators.

"The man was almost driven mad by this unlooked-for calamity, by which he was deprived of the many comforts his nursed treasure had so fairly promised him for the remainder of life. He could devise no plan for recovering his lost valuables, and resolved on hastening to the nearest village, there to seek advice and assistance from his fellow-men; where having related his unfortunate adventures, and declaring he had done nothing to anger the creatures, he was asked if he had dined, and if so, had he given them a share? He said, he had indeed cooked his dinner, and observed the monkeys seated before him whilst he dined, but he did not offer them any.

"'That, that, is your offence!' cried the villagers in a breath; 'who would ever think of eating without sharing his meal with men or with animals? You are punished for your

greediness, friend.'—'Be it so,' said the traveller; 'I am severely used by the brutes, and am now resolved on punishing them effectually in return for the ill they have done me.'

"He accordingly sold the gold ornaments from his arms and neck, purchased a quantity of sugar, ghee, flour, and arsenic, returned to his old quarters, prepared every thing for cooking, and, in a short time, had a large dish filled with rich-looking cakes, to tempt his enemies to their own ruin.

"The feast was prepared in the presence of the assembled multitude of monkeys. The Hindoo placed the dish before his guests, saying, 'There, my lords! your food is ready!' The old monkey advanced towards the dish, took up a cake, raised it to his nose, and then returning it to the dish, immediately ran off, followed by the whole of his associates into the thick jungle.

"The man began to despair, and thought himself the most unlucky creature existing; when, at length, he saw them returning with augmented numbers; he watched them nar-

rowly, and observed each monkey had a green leaf in his paw, in which he folded a cake and devoured the whole speedily. The man expected of course to see them sicken immediately, for the quantity of arsenic he had used was sufficient, he imagined, to have killed twenty times their number. But, no: his stratagem entirely failed; for the leaf they had provided themselves was an antidote to the poison put into their food. The traveller thus sacrificed even that little which would have carried him on his journey, had he been satisfied with his first loss; but the Hindoo cherished a revengeful disposition, and thereby was obliged to beg his way to his family."

The next monkey story is equally marvellous, the Natives believe that it actually occurred; I am disposed, however, to think all these stories were originally fables to impress a moral upon the ignorant.

"Near a small town in the province of Oude there is a jungle of some extent, inhabited by monkeys. A certain man of the Hindoo class, residing in the town, resolved upon enjoying

himself one day with a bottle of arrack he had procured by stealth, and since it is well known that spirits or fermented liquors are prohibited articles in the territories governed by Mussulmaun rulers, the man betook himself with his treat to the neighbouring jungle, where in private he might drink the spirit he loved, and escape the vigilance of the police.

"Arriving at a convenient spot, the Hindoo seated himself under a tree, prepared his hookha, drew from his wrapper the bottle of spirits, and a small cup he had provided; and if ever he knew what happiness was in his life, this moment was surely his happiest.

"He drank a cup of his liquor, smoked his hookha with increased relish, and thought of nothing but his present enjoyment. Presently he heard the sound of rustling in the trees, and in a few minutes after, a fine sturdy monkey, of the Lungoor tribe, placed himself very near to him and his bottle.

"The Hindoo was of a lively temper, and withal kindly disposed towards the living, though not of his own species. Having a

cake of dry bread in his waistband, he broke off a piece and threw it to his visitor; the monkey took the bread and sniffed at the cup. 'Perhaps you may like to taste as well as to smell,' thought the Hindoo, as he poured out the liquor into the cup, and presented it to his guest.

"The monkey raised the cup with both paws to his mouth, sipped of its contents, winked his eyes, appeared well satisfied with the flavour, and to the surprise of the Hindoo, finished the cup, which was no sooner done, than away he sprang up the tree again.

"'Had I known you would run away so soon, my guest, I should have spared my arrack;' thought the Hindoo. But the monkey quickly returned to his old position, threw down a gold mohur to his entertainer, and sat grinning with apparent satisfaction. The Hindoo, astonished at the sight of gold, thought to repay his benefactor by another cup of spirits, which he placed before the monkey, who drank it off, and again mounted the tree, and shortly returned with a second gold mohur.

"Delighted with the profit his arrack produced, the Hindoo drank sparingly himself, for each time the monkey took a cup, a gold mohur was produced, until the man counted eight of these valuable coins on his palm. By this time, however, the monkey was completely overcome by the strength of his potations, and lay apparently senseless before the Hindoo, who fancied now was his turn to mount the tree, where he found, on diligent search, in a hollow place, a small bag of gold mohurs, with which he walked off, leaving the monkey prostrate on the earth.

"The Hindoo determined on going some distance from his home, in a different direction, fearing his secret treasure might be the means of drawing him into difficulties amongst the people of his own town, who had probably been robbed by the monkey at some previous period.

"In the mean while the monkey is supposed to have recovered from his stupor, and the next morning on discovering his loss, he set up a horrid yell, which brought together all his fellow-inhabitants of the jungle; and some

neighbouring villagers saw an immense number of monkeys of all sorts and sizes, collected together in a body. The story runs that this army of monkeys was headed by the one who had recovered from his drunken fit, and that they marched away from the jungle in pursuit of the robber.

"Their first march was to the adjacent village, where every house was visited in turn by the monkeys, without success; no one ever venturing to obstruct or drive away the intruders, fearing their resentment. After which they sallied out of the village to the main road, minutely looking for footsteps, as a clue, on the sandy pathway; and by this means discovering the track of the Hindoo, they pursued the road they had entered throughout the day and night. Early in the morning of the following day, the monkeys advanced to the serai (inn, or halting place for travellers) soon after the Hindoo himself had quitted it, who had actually sojourned there the previous night.

"On the road, when the horde of monkeys met any traveller, he was detained by them

until the chief of them had scrutinized his features, and he was then liberated on finding he was not the person they were in pursuit of. After having marched nearly forty miles from their home, they entered one of the halting places for travellers, where the Hindoo was resting after his day's journey.

"The monkey having recognized the robber, immediately grasped him by the arm, and others entering, the frightened robber was searched, the purse discovered in his wrapper, which the chief monkey angrily seized, and then counted over its contents, piece by piece. This done, finding the number correct, the monkey selected eight pieces, and threw them towards the Hindoo; and distributing the remaining number of gold mohurs amongst the monkeys, who placed each his coin in the hollow of his cheek, the whole body retired from the serai to retrace their steps to the jungle."

LETTER XXIII.

The Soofies.—Opinion of the Mussulmauns concerning Solomon.—The Ood-ood.—Description of the Soofies and their sect.—Regarded with great reverence.—Their protracted fasts.—Their opinion esteemed by the Natives.—Instance of the truth of their predictions.—The Saalik and Majoob Soofies.—The poets Haafiz and Saadie.—Character and attainments of Saadie.—His "Goolistaun."—Anecdotes descriptive of the origin of that work.—Farther remarks on the character and history of Saadie.—Interesting anecdotes illustrative of his virtues and the distinguishing characteristics of the Soofies.

The life of King Solomon, with all his acts, is the subject of many an author's pen, both in the Arabic and Persian languages; consequently the learned Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun are intimately acquainted with his virtues, his talent, and the favour with which he was visited by the great goodness of the Almighty.

In the course of my sojourn amongst them, I have heard many remarkable and some interesting anecdotes relating to Solomon, which the learned men assure me are drawn from sources of unquestionable authority.

They affirm that the wisdom of Solomon not only enabled him to search into the most hidden thoughts of man, and to hold converse with them in their respective languages, but that the gift extended even to the whole brute creation; by which means he could hold unlimited converse, not only with the animate, as birds, beasts, and fish, but with inanimate objects, as shrubs, trees, and, indeed, the whole tribe of vegetable nature; and, further, that he was permitted to discern and control aerial spirits, as demons, genii, &c.

The pretty bird, known in India by the name of Ood-ood is much regarded by the Mussulmauns, as by their tradition this bird was the hurkaarah of King Solomon; and entrusted with his most important commisssions whenever he required intelligence to be conveyed to or from a far distant place, because

he could place greater confidence in the veracity of this bird, and rely on more certain dispatch, than when entrusting his commands to the most worthy of his men servants.

The ood-ood is beautifully formed, has a variegated plumage of black, yellow, and white, with a high tuft of feathers on its head, through which is a spear of long feathers protruding directly across the head for several inches, and is of the woodpecker species. The princes, Nuwaubs, and nobility of Hindoostaun, keep hurkaarahs for the purpose of conveying and obtaining intelligence, who are distinguished by a short spear, with a tuft of silk or worsted about the middle of the handle, and the tail of the ood-ood in the front of their turban, to remind them of this bird, which they are expected to imitate both in dispatch and fidelity. I am told, these men (from their early training) are enabled to run from fifty to sixty miles, bare-footed, and return the same distance without halting on the same day.

The religious devotees of the Mussulmaun persuasion, who are denominated Soofies, are

conjectured, by many, to have a similar gift with Solomon of understanding the thoughts of other men. By some it is imagined that Solomon was the first Soofie; by others, that Ali, the husband of Fatima, imparted the knowledge of that mystery which constitutes the real Soofie. I am acquainted with some Natives who designate the Soofies "Freemasons," but I imagine this to be rather on account of both possessing a secret, than for any similarity in other respects, between the two orders of people.

My business, however, is to describe. The Soofies then are, as far as I can comprehend, strictly religious men, who have forsaken entirely all attachment to earthly things, in their adoration of the one supreme God. They are sometimes found dwelling in the midst of a populous city, yet, even there they are wholly detached from the world, in heart, soul, and mind, exercising themselves in constant adoration of, and application to God; occasionally shutting themselves up for several weeks together in a hut of mud, thatched with coarse grass, with

scarce sufficient provision to support the smallest living animal, and water barely enough to moisten their parched lips during the weeks thus devoted to solitary retirement and prayer.

When these recluses can no longer support their self-inflicted privation, they open the door of their hut, a signal anxiously watched for by such persons as have a desire to meet the eye of the holy man, of whom they would inquire on some (to them) interesting matter; probably regarding their future prospects in the world, the cause of the ill-health and prospects of recovery of a diseased member of their family, or any like subject of interest to the inquirer.

The Soofie, I am told, does not approve of being thus teazed by the importunities of the thronging crowd, who beset his threshold the instant his door is heard to open. Being weak in body, after the fatigue of a protracted fast of weeks together, his replies to the questions (preferred always with remarkable humility) are brief and prompt; and the Natives assure

me dependence may always be placed on the good Soofie's reply being strictly the words of truth. On this account, even if the oracle's reply disappoint the hopes of the questioner, he retires without a murmur, for then he knows the worst of his calamity, and if God orders it so, he must not complain, because Infinite Wisdom cannot err, and the holy man will assuredly speak the truth.

The practice so long prevailing in Europe of visiting the cunning man, to have the hidden mysteries of fate solved, occurred to my recollection when I first heard of this custom in India.

"Will my son return from his travels during my lifetime?"—was the inquiry of a truly religious man, whom I knew very intimately, to one of the professed Soofie class, on his emerging from his hut. The reply was as follows:—"Go home!—be happy;—comfort your heart;—he is coming!" By a singular coincidence it happened, that the following day's daak produced a letter, announcing to him

that his son was on his way returning to his home and his father, who had for some years despaired of ever again seeing his son in this life.

It is needless to say, that the veneration shown to this Soofie was much increased by the singular coincidence, because the person who consulted him was a man of remarkable probity, and not given to indulge in idle conversations with the worldly-minded of that city.

There are many men in this country, I am told, who make Soofieism their profession, but who are in reality hypocrites to the world, and their Maker: actuated sometimes by the love of applause from the multitude, but oftener, I am assured, by mercenary motives. A Soofie enjoying public favour may, if he choose, command any man's wealth who gives credit to his supposed power. All men pay a marked deference to his holy character, and few would have the temerity to withhold the desired sum, however inconvenient to bestow, should the demand be made by one professing to be a Soofie.

The real Soofie is, however, a very different character, and an object of deserved veneration, if only for the virtue of perfect content with which his humble mind is endued: respect cannot be withheld by the reflecting part of the world, when contemplating a fellow-creature (even of a different faith) whose life is passed in sincere devotion to God, and strictly conforming to the faith he has embraced. My Native friends inform me,—and many reprobate the notion,—that the Soofies believe they resolve into the Divine essence when their souls are purified from the animal propensities of this life by severe privations, fervent and continual prayer, watchings, resisting temptations, and profound meditation in solitude. When they have acquired the perfection they aim at, and are really and truly the perfect Soofie, they rarely quit the hut they have first selected for their retirement, and into which no one ever attempts to intrude, without the Soofie commands it. He enjoys the universal respect and veneration of all classes of people; he has no worldly rewards to bestow, yet there

are servants always ready to do him any kindness, amongst the number of his admirers who flock to catch but a glimpse of the holy man, and fancy themselves better when but the light of his countenance has beamed upon them. Proudly pre-eminent, in his own eyes, is the one amongst the multitude who may be so far honoured as to be allowed to place a platter of food before the Soofie, when the imperative demands of Nature prevail over his self-inflicted abstinence.

Some Soofies shut themselves in their hut for a few days, and others for weeks together, without seeing or being seen by a human being. Their general clothing is simply a wrapper of calico, and their only furniture a coarse mat. They are said to be alike insensible to heat or cold, so entirely are their hearts weaned from the indulgence of earthly comforts.

I must explain, however, that there are two classes of the professedly devout Soofies, viz. the Saalik, and the Majoob. The true Saalik Soofies are those who give up the world and its allurements, abstain from all sensual enjoy-

ments, rarely associate with their fellow-men, devote themselves entirely to their Creator, and are insensible to any other enjoyments but such as they derive from their devotional exercises.

The Majoob Soofies have no established home nor earthly possessions; they drink wine and spirits freely, when they can obtain them. Many people suppose this class have lost the possession of their reason, and make excuse for their departure from the law on that score. Both classes are nevertheless in great respect, because the latter are not deemed guilty of breaking the law, since they are supposed to be insensible of their actions whilst indulging in the forbidden juice of the grape.

Haafiz, the celebrated poet of Persia, it is related, was a Soofie of the Majoob class, he lived without a thought of providing for future exigencies, accepted the offerings of food from his neighbour, drank wine freely when offered to him, and slept under any shed or hovel he met with, as contented as if he was in the palace of a king.

Saadie, the Persian poet, was, during the latter years of his life, a Saalik Soofie of the most perfect kind. Many of the inspirations of his pen, however, were written in that part of his life which was devoted to the world and its enjoyments; yet most of these indicate purity of thought in a remarkable degree. Saadie's life was subject to the most extraordinary vicissitudes; he possessed an independent mind, scorning every allurement of wealth which might tend to shackle his principles. He is said to have repeatedly rejected offers of patronage and pecuniary assistance from many noblemen, whilst he still loved the world's enticements, declaring he never could submit to confine himself to attendance on an earthly master for any lengthened period. His wit, pleasing deportment, and polite manners, together with the amiable qualities of his heart, rendered him a general favourite, and they who could boast most intimacy with Saadie were the most honoured by the world; for, though but the poor Saadie, he shed a lustre

over the assemblies of the great and noble in birth or station, by his brilliant mind.

The "Goolistaun" of Saadie has been so often eulogized, as to render it unnecessary for me to add a single word in commendation of its style and morality; but I will here take leave to insert an anecdote translated for me by my husband, in allusion to the incident which prompted Saadie to write that work, under the title of "Goolistaun" (Garden of Roses). I will also here remark, that in the principal cities of Persia, the Mussulmauns of that age were not equally rigid in their observance of the law interdicting the use of fermented liquors, as are those of the present day in Hindoostaun. Many young men among the higher orders indulged freely in the "life-inspiring draught," as they were wont to call the juice of the grape.

"Shiraaz was the abode and the presumptive birth-place of Saadie. In his early years he was led by a love of society to depart from the rigid customs of his forefathers, and with

the wild youth of his acquaintance to indulge freely in nightly potations of the forbidden juice of the grape. He had long delighted his friends and favourites by sharing in their nocturnal revels, and adding by his wit and pleasantry to the mirthful moments as they flew by unheeded.

"At a particular season of the year, a convivial party were accustomed to assemble in a garden of roses, from midnight to the rising sun, to indulge in the luxury of wine during that refreshing season; as to receive the first scent from the opening roses as they expand with the dawn of the morning, constituted a delight, proverbially intoxicating, amongst the sons of Persia. Saadie composed many airs for the occasion, and gifted by Nature with a voice equalled only by his wit, he sang them with a melody so sweet as to render him almost the idol of his companions.

"At one of these seasons of enjoyment, the festival was prepared by his circle of friends as usual, but Saadie delayed his visit. The whole

party were lost in surprise and regret at an absence as unexpected as deplored. Some time was passed in fruitless conjecture on the cause of his delay, and at last it was agreed that a deputation from his well-beloved associates should go in quest of their favourite. They accordingly went, and knocked at the door of his room, which they found was securely fastened within. The poet inquired 'Who is it that disturbs my repose, at this hour, when all good subjects of the King should be at rest?'—'Why, Saadie, Saadie!' they replied, 'it is your friends and associates, your favourites!—have you forgotten our enjoyments, and this season of bliss? Come, come, open the door, Saadie! away with us! our revels await your presence. Nothing gives enjoyment to our party until you add your smiles to our mirth.'

"'Let me alone,' replied Saadie; 'enjoy your pastime, if such it be to ye; but for me, I am heartily ashamed of my late wanton pursuits. I have resolved on mending my ways, whilst yet I have time; and be ye also wise, my

friends; follow Saadie's example. Go home to your beds, and forsake the sinful habits of the world!'

"'Why Saadie, what aileth thee! art thou mad?—or has the study of philosophy drawn thee from thy former self, whilst yet thine hairs are jet with youth? These reflections of thine will suit us all far better when time hath frosted our beards. Come, come, Saadie, away with us! let not the precious moments escape in this unprofitable converse. You must come, Saadie; our hearts will break without you!'

"'Nay, nay,' responded Saadie, 'my conscience smites me that I have erred too long. It suits not my present temper to join in your mirth.'—'Open the door to us at any rate,' sounded from the many voices without; 'speak to us face to face, our dear and well-beloved friend! let us have admission, and we will argue the subject coolly.'—Saadie's good-nature could not resist the appeal, the door was unbarred, and the young men entered in a body.

"'We have all wickedly broken the law of the faithful,' said Saadie to his guests; and he

tried to reason with his unreasonable favourites, who, on their part, used raillery, bantering, argument, and every power of speech, to turn Saadie from his steady purpose of now fulfilling the law he had wilfully violated. They effected nothing in moving him from his purpose, until one of the young men, to whom Saadie was much attached, spoke tenderly to him of the affection both himself and friends entertained for him, adding, 'It is written in our law, that if a Mussulmaun be guilty of any sin, however great, (and all kinds of sin are therein enumerated), and he afterwards sincerely repents before God, with fasting and prayer, his sins shall be forgiven. Now you, Saadie, who are deeply versed in the way of wisdom, and better acquainted with the words of the Khoraun than any other man on earth, tell me, is there in that holy book a promise made of forgiveness for that man who breaks the hearts of his fellow creatures? With us there are many hearts so devotedly attached to you, that must assuredly burst the bonds of life by your complete and sudden desertion of them, so that

not one sin but many shall be hurled by their deaths on your conscience, to be atoned for how you may.'

"Saadie loved them all too dearly to resist their persevering proofs of affection, and he suffered himself, after a little more argument, to be led forth to the scene of their revels, where, however, he argued strongly on the impropriety of their habits and refused to be tempted by the alluring wine. He then promised to prepare for them a never-fading garden of roses which should last with the world; every leaf of which, if plucked with attention, should create a greater and more lasting bliss about their hearts than the best wine of Shiraaz, or the most refined aromatic had hitherto conveyed to their sensual appetites."

After the evening in question, Saadie abstained from all participation in the revels of his friends, and devoted his hours to retirement that he might accomplish the "Goolistaun" he had pledged himself to cultivate for their more substantial benefit and perpetual enjoyment. The simplicity, elegance, purity of style, and

moral precepts conveyed in this work, prove the author to have been worthy the respect with which his name has been reverenced through all ages, and to this day, by the virtuously disposed his work is read with unabated interest.

Saadie did not remain very long at Shiraaz after his conversion, nor did he settle any where for any long period. The Persian writers assert that he disliked the importunities of the world, which, sensible of his merits as a poet and companion, constantly urged him to associate with them. He, therefore, lived a wandering life for many years, carefully concealing his name, which had then become so celebrated by his writings, that even beyond the boundaries of Persia his fame was known.

As his manner of life was simple, his wants were few; he depended solely on the care of Divine Providence for his daily meal, avoiding every thing like laying by from to-day's produce for the morrow's sustenance. He considered that provision alone acceptable, which the

bounty of Divine Providence daily provided for his need, by disposing the hearts of others to tender a suitable supply. In fact, he is said to have been of opinion that the store laid up by men for future exigencies lessened the delightful feeling of dependance on the bounty of God, who faileth not, day by day, to provide for the birds and beasts of the forest with equal care as for the prince on his throne; he would say, "I shall be tempted to forget from whom my bread is received, if I have coins in my purse to purchase from the vender. Sweet is the daily bread granted to my prayers and dependance on the sole Giver of all good!'"

To illustrate the necessity of perfect content, he relates, in his writings, the following interesting anecdote:—

"I was once travelling on foot, where the roads were rugged, my shoes worn out, and my feet cut by the stones. I was desirous of pursuing my journey quickly, and secretly mourned that my feet pained me, and that my shoes were now rendered useless; often wishing, as I stepped with caution, that I pos-

sessed the means of replenishing these articles so useful to a traveller.

"With these feelings of dissatisfaction, I approached the spot where a poor beggar was seated, who, by some calamity, had been deprived of both his feet. I viewed this sad object with much commiseration, for he was dependant on the kindness of his fellow-beggars to convey him daily to that public spot, where the passing traveller, seeing his misery, might be induced to bestow upon him a few coins to provide for his subsistence. 'Alas! alas!' said I, 'how have I suffered my mind to be disturbed because my feet pained me, and were shoeless. Ungrateful being that I am! rather ought I to rejoice with an humble heart, that my gracious Benefactor hath granted me the blessing of feet, and sound health. Never let me again murmur or repine for the absence of a luxury, whilst my real wants are amply supplied.'"

One of my objects in detailing the anecdotes of Saadie in this place, is to give a more correct idea of the Soofie character of that particular

class called Saalik, to which he ultimately belonged.

The next translation from the life of Saadie will show how beautifully his well-tempered spirit soared above those difficulties which the common mind would have sunk under. His fame, his superior manners, were of that rare kind, that distance from his birth-place could be no obstacle to his making friends, if he chose to disclose his name in any city of Asia.

I have no dates to guide me in placing the several anecdotes in their proper order; this, however, will be excused, as I do not pretend to give his history.

"On one occasion, Saadie was journeying on foot, and being overtaken by the Arabs, (who, or a party of, it may be presumed, were at war with Persia), he was taken prisoner, and conveyed by them, with many others, to Aleppo. The prisoners, as they arrived, were all devoted to the public works (fortifying the city), and obliged to labour according to their ability.

"Saadie, unused to any branch of mechanical labour, could only be employed in con-

veying mortar to the more scientific workmen. For many months he laboured in this way, degrading as the employment was, without a murmur, or a desire that his fate had been otherways ordained. Hundreds of men then living in Aleppo would have been proud of the honour and the good name they must have acquired from the world, by delivering the Poet from his thraldom, had they known he was amongst them, a slave to the Arabs; for Saadie was revered as a saint by those who had either read his works, or heard of his name, extolled as it was for his virtues. But Saadie placed his trust in God alone, and his confidence never for an instant forsook him; he kept his name concealed from all around him, laboured as commanded, and was contented.

"Many months of degrading servitude had passed by, when one day, it so happened that a rich Jew merchant, who had formerly lived at Shiraaz, and there had been honoured by the regard of the idolized Saadie, visited Aleppo, on his mercantile concerns. Curiosity led him to survey the improvements going on in the

city; and passing the spot were Saadie was then presenting his load of mortar to the mason, he thought he recognized the Poet, yet deemed it impossible that he should be engaged in so degrading an employment, who was the object of universal veneration in Persia. Still the likeness to his former friend was so striking, that he felt no trifling degree of pleasure, whilst contemplating those features whose resemblance recalled the image of that holy man who was so dear to him, and brought back to his recollection many delightful hours of friendly converse, which at Shiraaz had cheated time of its weight, and left impressions on his heart to profit by during life.

"'I will talk with this man,' thought the Jew; 'surely he must be related to my friend; the face, the form, the graceful manner, and even in that rude garb and occupation, he so strongly resembles my friend, that I cannot doubt he must be of the same kindred.'

"Drawing near to Saadie, the Jew accosted him with, 'Who are you, friend,—and whence do you come?' Saadie's voice dispelled every

doubt of the Jew, their eyes met, and in a few seconds they were clasped in each other's warm embrace, the Jew lamenting, in terms of warm sympathy, the degradation of the immortalized poet, and sainted man; whilst he in turn checked his friend's murmurings, by expressing his conviction that the wisdom of God knew best how to lead his confiding servants to himself, declaring his present occupation did not render him discontented.

"The Jew went without delay to the superintendant of the public works, and inquired the sum he would be willing to receive in lieu of the labourer whom he desired to purchase, carefully avoiding the name of Saadie lest the ransom should be proportioned to the real value of such a slave. The man agreed to take one hundred and ten pieces of silver (each in value half a dollar). The sum was promptly paid, and the Jew received an order to take away his purchase when and wherever he pleased. He lost no time in possessing himself of his treasured friend, conveyed him to the city, where he clothed him in apparel better

suited to his friend, and on the same day Saadie accompanied the benevolent Israelite to his country residence, some miles distant from the city of Aleppo.

"Arrived here, Saadie enjoyed uninterrupted peace of mind for a long season, his heart bounding with gratitude to God, who had, he felt assured, worked out his deliverance from slavery and its consequences; and as may be supposed from such a heart, Saadie was truly sensible of the benevolent Jew's kindness, with whom he was constrained to remain a considerable time, for the Jew indeed loved him as a brother, and always grieved at the bare probability that they might ever again be separated; and desiring to secure his continuance with him during their joint lives, he proposed that Saadie should accept his only daughter in marriage with a handsome dowry.

"Saadie resisted his friend's offer for some time, using arguments which, instead of altering his friend's purpose, only strengthened the desire to secure this amiable man as the husband of his daughter. Saadie assured him he was

sensible of the offence his friend might give to the opinions of his people, by the proposal of uniting his daughter to a man of another faith, and that their prejudices would bring innumerable evils on his good name by such an alliance. 'No,' said Saadie, 'I cannot consent to such a measure. I have already been a great trouble to you, if not a burden; let me depart, for I cannot consent to draw down on the head of my friend the censures of his tribe, and, perhaps, in after-time, disappointments. I have, indeed, no desire to marry; my heart and mind are otherways engaged.'

"The friends often discussed the subject ere Saadie gave way to the earnest solicitations of the Jew, to whose happiness the grateful heart of Saadie was about to be sacrificed when he reluctantly consented to become the husband of the young Jewess. The marriage ceremony was performed according to the Jewish rites, when Saadie was overpowered with the caresses and munificence of his friend and father-in-law.

"A very short season of domestic peace resulted

to him from the alliance. The young lady had been spoiled by the over-indulgence of her doating parent, her errors of temper and mind having never been corrected. Proud, vindictive, and arrogant, she played the part of tyrant to her meek and faultless husband. She strove to rouse his temper by taunts, revilings, and indignities that required more than mortal nature to withstand replying to, or bear with composure.

"Still Saadie went on suffering in silence; although the trials he had to endure undermined his health, he never allowed her father to know the misery he had entailed on himself by this compliance with his well-meant wishes; nor was the secret cause of his altered appearance suspected by the kind-hearted Jew, until by common report his daughter's base behaviour was disclosed to the wretched father, who grieved for the misfortunes he had innocently prepared for the friend of his heart.

"Saadie, it is said, entreated the good Jew to allow of a divorce from the Jewess, which, however, was not agreed to; and when his

sufferings had so increased that his tranquility was destroyed, fearing the loss of reason would follow, he fled from Aleppo in disguise and retraced his steps to Shiraaz, where in solitude his peace of mind was again restored, for there he could converse with his merciful Creator and Protector uninterrupted by the strife of tongues."

LETTER XXIV.

The Soofies continued.—Eloy Bauxh.—Assembly of Saalik Soofies.—Singular exhibition of their zeal.—Mystery of Soofeism.—The term Soofie and Durweish explained.—Anecdote of Shah Sheriff.—Shah Jee and the Pattaan.—Dialogue on death between Shah Jee and his wife.—Exemplary life of his grandson.—Anecdote of a Mussulmaun lady.—Reflections on modern Hindoos.—Anecdotes of Shah ood Dowlah and Meer Nizaam.

My last Letter introduced the Soofies to your notice, the present shall convey a further account of some of these remarkable characters who have obtained so great celebrity among the Mussulmauns of India, as to form the subjects of daily conversation. I have heard some rigid Mussulmauns declare they discredit the mysterious knowledge a Soofie is said to possess, yet the same persons confess themselves staggered by the singular circumstances attending the practice of Soofies living in their vicinity,

which they have either witnessed or heard related by men whose veracity they cannot doubt; amongst the number I may quote an intimate acquaintance of my husband's, a very venerable Syaad of Lucknow, who relates an anecdote of Saalik Soofies, which I will here introduce.

"Meer Eloy Bauxh, a Mussulmaun of distinguished piety, who has devoted a long life to the service of God, and in doing good to his fellow-men, tells me, that being curious to witness the effect of an assembly of Saalik Soofies, he went with a party of friends, all equally disposed with himself to be amused by the eccentricities of the Soofies, whose practice they ridiculed as at least absurd,—to speak in no harsher terms of their pretended supernatural gifts.

"This assembly consisted of more than a hundred persons, who by agreement met at a large hall in the city of Lucknow, for the purpose of 'remembering the period of absence,' as they term the death of a highly revered Soofie of their particular class. The room being

large, and free admittance allowed to all persons choosing to attend the assembly, Meer Eloy Bauxh and his party entered, and seated themselves in a convenient place for the more strict scrutiny of the passing scene.

"The service for the occasion began with a solemn strain by the musical performers, when one of the inspired Soofies commenced singing in a voice of remarkable melody. The subject was a hymn of praise to the great Creator, most impressively composed in the Persian language. Whilst the Soofie was singing, one of the elders in particular,—though all seemed sensibly affected by the strain,—rose from his seat, in what the Soofies themselves call, 'the condition changed,' which signifies, by what I could learn, a religious ecstacy. This person joined in the same melody which the other Soofie had begun, and at the same time accompanied the music by capering and sobbing in the wildest manner imaginable. His example had the effect of exciting all the Soofies on whom his eyes were cast to rise also and join him in the hymn and dance.

"The singularity of this scene seemed, to Meer Eloy Bauxh and his party, so ludicrous that they could not refrain from laughing in an audible manner, which attracted the attention of the principal Soofie engaged in the dance, who cast his eyes upon the merry party, not, however, apparently in anger. Strange as he confesses it to be,—and even now it seems more like a dream than a reality,—at the moment he met the eye of the Soofie, there was an instant glow of pure happiness on his heart, a sensation of fervent love to God, which he had never before felt, in his most devout moments of prayer and praise; his companions were similarly affected, their eyes filled with tears, their very souls seemed elevated from earth to heaven in the rapture of their songs of adoration, which burst forth from their lips in unison with the whole Soofie assemblage.

"Before they had finished their song of praise, which lasted a considerable time, the chief of the Soofie party sunk exhausted on the carpet, whilst the extraordinary display of devotion continued in full force on the whole

assembly, whether Soofies or mere visitors, for many minutes after the principal devotee had fallen to the floor. Water was then procured, and animation gradually returned to the poor exhausted devotee, but with considerable delay. Meer Eloy Bauxh says he waited until the Soofie was perfectly restored to sense, and saw him taken to his place of abode; he then returned to his own home to meditate on the events of a day he never can forget."

Soofeism, it appears, (by the accounts I have received,) is a mystery; the secret of which can only be imparted by the professor to such persons as have been prepared for its reception, by a course of religious instruction. No one can be initiated into the mystery who has not first renounced all worldly vanities and ambitious projects—who is not sincerely repentant of past offences—who has not acquired perfect humility of heart, and an entire resignation to the Divine Will—a lively faith in God, and a firm determination to love and serve Him, from a conviction, "That God alone is worthy to be served, loved, and worshipped

by His creatures." Thus prepared, the person is to receive instruction from a Calipha, (head or leader of the Soofies), who directs the pupil in certain exercises of the heart, which constitute the secrets of their profession. What these exercises are, I am not competent to give an opinion, but judging by the way a real Soofie conducts himself, it may be presumed his practices are purely religious; for I am assured that he is devoted to all good ways; that he carefully avoids worldly vanities, and every species of temptation and alluring gratification of the senses; that he is incessant in prayer, and in fasting severe; free from all prejudice, as regards the belief or persuasion of other men, so long as they worship God alone; regarding all mankind as brothers, himself the humblest of the race; claiming no merit for the ascendancy he has acquired over earthly wishes, he gives glory alone to God, whom he loves and worships.

All the Durweish are of the Mussulmaun persuasion. Many are devout Durweish, who are, nevertheless, unacquainted with the mys-

tery of Soofeism; and, to use their own words, (by which the Natives distinguish them), "Every real Soofie is undoubtedly a Durweish, but all Durweishes are not Soofies," although their lives may be devoted much in the same holy way, both in the practice of religion and abstinence from worldly enjoyments; and if the writers on these subjects may be believed, many wonderful cures have been effected by the prayers of the devout Durweish.

There are some pretenders, I am told, who put themselves forth to the world in the character of a Durweish, who are not, in fact, entitled to the appellation,—hypocritical devotees, who wear the outward garb of humility, without a feeling of that inward virtue which is the characteristic principle of the true Durweish. The distinction between the real and the pretended Durweish, may be illustrated by the following anecdote which I have received from the mouth of Meer Hadjee Shaah:—

"In the last century," he says, "there lived at or near Delhi, a very pure-minded Durweish,

named Shah Sherif ood deen Mah-mood, (he was known in his latter years by several of my aged acquaintance at Lucknow, and his son and grandson both lived, at different periods, in that city). This person forsook the world whilst in the prime of manhood, and devoted himself to prayer, fasting, and good deeds. He was esteemed the most humble-minded of human beings, and his devotion to his Maker sincere and ardent. His principal abode was Delhi, where his wife and children also resided, to whom he was tenderly attached; yet so tempered were his affections, that he never allowed any earthly endearments to interfere with his devotions, or to separate him from his love to his Creator.

"It was announced by the Soofies and Durweish, that on a certain day a festival or assembly of holy men would meet for the service of God, at the Jummah musjud (Friday mosque), situated in the city of Delhi.

"Shah Sherif ood deen was disposed to attend the meeting, which consisted of the heads or superiors of several classes of the

religious, with their disciples and followers. At this meeting, as was expected, were assembled the Soofies, Durweish, and religious mendicants of all ranks and conditions, from those clothed in gold-cloth and brocade, down to the almost naked Faakeer; and amongst the latter number may be classed the humble-minded Shah Sherif ood deen. A small wrapper girt about his loins by a girdle of black wool spun into small ropes, and a similar article wound round his head, with a coarse white sheet over his shoulders for his summer apparel; and a black blanket to shelter his naked limbs from the cold winter, formed his sole wardrobe.

"This holy man took his station in the most humble spot of the assembly, 'sitting amongst the shoes' of the more esteemed or more aspiring personages. As there was nothing remarkable in his appearance, he remained unobserved, or unnoticed by the multitude present. Many of the assembly made great display of their right to pre-eminence, by the costliness of their robes, the splendour of their

equipage, and the number of their servants; striving to command respect, if possible, by their superior external habiliments.

"This meeting had been convened to celebrate the death of one of their order, which had occurred some years prior. After prayers had been read, suited to the occasion, a poor man, whose very appearance might excite compassion, addressed the heads of the devotees with folded hands, beseeching them, who were accounted so truly holy in their lives, to offer up a prayer for him who had so long suffered severe affliction, by reason of his neck and face being drawn awry, from a paralytic attack, or some like calamity. The sufferer said, 'I am a poor merchant, and have a large family dependant altogether on my personal exertions for support; but, alas! this illness prevents me from attending to the business of life. I am wasting both in body and in substance through this grievous affliction.'

"The sick man's address was heard by the whole assembly in silence; many present, both Soofies and Durweish, were really pious men,

and were willing to allow the person who seemed to be the head of this assembly, to intercede in behalf of the sufferer. To him they all looked, expecting he would commence a prayer in which they might join; but he, it is suspected, conscious of his own duplicity in assuming only the character of a Soofie without the virtues, was anxious to dismiss the supplicant, with a promise that prayer should certainly be made for him in private, adding, 'This is not a proper season for your application; it is disrespectful to disturb our meeting with your requests; we came not here to listen to your importunities, but on more important business.'

"'True, my Lord,' answered the afflicted man; 'I am sensible of all you say; but, I do assure you, private prayer has been tried for my relief by many individuals of your holy profession, and I have still to mourn my calamity. I thought when so many holy persons were assembled together, the united prayer—in accordance with our Prophet's commands—offered up at this time, would certainly be

received at the throne of Mercy. I entreat then, at the hands of this venerable assembly, the aid I require.'

"The pretended Soofie looked haughtily on the sick man, and bade him retire to his home; he should have a prayer offered, he might depend, but it must be in private. The sufferer was still importunate, and urged every argument he could command, to induce the inexorable Soofie to allow the present assembly to offer a prayer on the spot for his recovery; but nothing he could urge availed with the proud Soofie, who at length grew angry even to the use of bitter words.

"Shah Sherif ood deen observed in silence the scene before him; at length he ventured (in the most respectful terms) to suggest to the heads of the assembly the propriety of vouchsafing the poor man's request; and hinted that, the prayer of some one more pure of heart than the rest might effectually reach the throne of Mercy in behalf of the supplicant.

"'And pray,' said the leader, rising haughtily, 'who gave you leave to suggest or recommend

to your superiors in knowledge and virtue? Is not our determination sufficient, that you, insignificant being! should presume to teach us what we ought to do?—you can know nothing of the Durweish's powerful prayers, nor the mystery of a Soofie's holy calling.'

"'I am, indeed, a very ignorant and unworthy creature,' replied Shah Sherif 'and acknowledge my great presumption in daring to speak before so many of my superiors in knowledge and virtue; but we are told in our hudeeths (true speech) that the prayers of many hearts may prevail in a good cause, whilst singly offered the same prayer might fail.' The proud Soofie's anger seemed to increase as the Durweish spoke; he bade him keep silence, and reviled him with many bitter words, which the good Shah received with his usual humility and forbearance. At length, the Shah looked attentively at the Soofie, who had thus rebuked and insulted him, and said, 'I will believe, Sir, you are the Soofie you aspire to be thought among your fellow-men, if you

will immediately offer up your single prayer, by which the suffering man may be relieved; for we know such prayers have been answered by the gracious Giver of all good.'

" 'What do you know of the powerful prayer of the Soofie?' replied the proud man, 'I suspect you to be an impostor in your humble exterior.'—'No,' said the Shah, 'I am but a poor beggar, and a humble, the very humblest servant of God.'—'You pretend to much humility,' retorted the Soofie, 'suppose we see one of your miraculous works in answer to your prayer; it would please us to witness what you can do.'

" Shah Sherif ood deen raised his eyes to Heaven, his heart went with his prayer, and in a dignified manner he stretched forth his hand towards the afflicted person. The man was instantly restored; then drawing his hand into a direct line with the proud Soofie, and pointing his finger to him, he said, 'What more, friend, dost thou now require of me? The man's affliction is removed, but the power which

is delegated to me rests still on my finger; command me, to whom shall I present it; to you, or any one of your people?'

"The proud Soofie hung his head abashed and confounded, he had not power to answer. The Shah observed his confusion and said, 'It is not well to pray for relief to one poor weak fellow-creature, and then to afflict another; to the mountain's retreat, I will consign this malady.' Then shaking his hand as if to relieve himself from a heavy weight, he uttered in a solemn tone, 'Go to the mountains!' and resumed that humble seat he had first chosen with a smile of composure beaming on his countenance." This miracle is actually believed by the Natives to be true.

Shah Sherif ood deen, say the people who knew him, spent the principal part of each day and night in silent prayer and meditation; no one ever ventured to intrude within his small sanctuary, but hundreds of people would assemble outside the building, in front of which he occasionally sat for an hour, but scarcely ever conversed with any one of his visitors.

During the time he was thus seated, he generally raised his eyes once or twice, and looked round on the faces of his audience. It was generally remarked, that no one could meet the eye of Shah Jee—the familiar appellation by which he was known—without an indescribable sensation of reverential awe, which irresistibly compelled them to withdraw their eyes. The talismanic power of Shah Jee's eyes had become proverbial throughout the city of Delhi. A certain Pattaan, however, of warlike appearance, a man remarkable for his bravery, declared amongst his associates that he would certainly out-stare Shah Jee, if ever they met, which he was resolved should be the very first opportunity; he accordingly went with his companions at a time when this Durweish was expected to appear in public.

The Pattaan was seated on the floor with many other people; when the Shah issued from his sanctuary, the people rose to make their salaams, which Shah Jee either did not, or would not observe, but seated himself according to his custom on the mat which had been spread for

him; where, his eyes fixed on the ground, he seemed for some time to be wholly absorbed in silent meditation. At length, raising his head, he turned his face to the long line of spectators, saluting with his eyes each person in the row, until he came to the Pattaan, who, according to his vow, kept his large eyes fixed on the Durweish. Shah Jee went on with his survey, and a second time cast a glance along the whole line, not omitting the Pattaan as before, whose gaze, his companions observed, was as firmly settled on the Durweish as at the first. A third time the eyes of the Shah went round the assembly and rested again on the Pattaan.

Observing the immoveable eyes of their Pattaan acquaintance, the visitors smiled at each other, and secretly gave him credit for a piety and pureness of heart which he was not before supposed to be blessed with; "How else," said they, "would he have been able to withstand the penetrating glance of the revered Durweish." Shah Jee rose from his seat, and retired, thus giving to the company a signal for their departure from the place.

The associates of the Pattaan congratulated him on his success, and inquired by what stratagem he had so well succeeded in fulfilling his promise; but his eyes being still fixed in a wild stare, he replied not to his questioners. They rallied him, and tried by a variety of means to dissolve his reverie; but the Pattaan was insensible, all the boasted energies of his mind having forsaken him. His friends were now alarmed at his abstractedness, and with considerable difficulty removed him from the place to his own home, where his family received him, for the first time, with grief, as he was their whole stay and support, and the kind head of a large family.

The Pattaan continued staring in the same state throughout the night and following day, talking wildly and incoherently. "The Pattaan is paid for his presumption," said some; others recommended application to be made to the Durweish, Shah Jee, who could alone remove the calamity. The wife and mother, with many female dependants, resolved on pleading his case with the benevolent Shah Jee; but as access to him

would be difficult, they conceived the idea of making their petition through the agency of the wife of the Durweish, to whom they accordingly went in a body at night, and related their distress, and the manner in which they supposed it to have originated, declaring, in conclusion, that as the excellent Durweish had been pleased to cast this affliction on their guardian, they must become slaves to his family, since bread could no longer be provided by the labour of him who had hitherto been their support.

The wife of the Durweish comforted the women by kind words, desiring them to wait patiently until her dear lord could be spoken with, as she never ventured to intrude on his privacy at an improper moment, however urgent the necessity. After a few hours' delay, passed with impatient feeling by the group of petitioning females, they were at length repaid by the voice of Shah Jee. His wife going to the door of his apartment, told him of the circumstance attending the Pattaan, and the distressed condition of the females of his family, who came

to supplicate his aid in restoring their relative to reason; adding, "What commands will you be pleased to convey by me? What remedy do you propose for the suffering Pattaan?"

The Durweish answered, "His impure heart, then, could not withstand the reflected light. Well, well! tell the poor women to be comforted, and as they desire to have the Pattaan restored to his former state, they need only purchase some sweetmeats from the bazaar, which the man being induced to eat, he will speedily be restored to his wonted bodily and mental powers."

Upon hearing the commands of Shah Jee, the women speedily departed, ejaculating blessings on the Durweish, his wife, and family. On their return they purchased the sweetmeats and presented them to the Pattaan, who devoured them with eagerness, and immediately afterwards his former senses returned, to the no small joy of his family circle. They inquired of him, what had been the state of his feelings during the time he was in that insensible state from which he was now happily relieved? He

replied, that the first gaze of the Durweish had fixed his eyes so firmly that he could by no means close or withdraw them from the object; the second glance detached his thoughts from every earthly vanity or wish; and that the third look from the same holy person, fixed him in unspeakable joys, transports pure and heavenly, which continued until he had eaten the sweetmeats they had presented, with a kind intention, he had no doubt, but which, nevertheless, must be ever regretted by him whilst life remained; for no earthly joy could be compared with that which he had experienced in his trance.

The Durweish Shah Sherif ood deen, was asked by some one why he had selected the bazaar sweetmeats as a remedy in the Pattaan's case? He answered, "Because I knew the man's heart was corrupt. The light which had been imparted to him could alone be removed by his partaking of the dirtiest thing mortals hold good for food, and surely there cannot be any thing more dirty than the bazaar sweetmeats, exposed as they are to the flies and dust of the city; and how filthily they

are manufactured requires not my aid in exposing."

This Durweish is said,—and believed by the good Mussulmaun people I have conversed with,—to have foreseen the hour when he should be summoned from this life into eternity; and three weeks prior to the appointed time, he endeavoured to fortify the minds of his wife and family, to bear with resignation that separation he had been warned should take place. He assembled his affectionate relatives on the occasion, and thus addressed them, "My dear family, it is the will of God that we should part; on such a day (mentioning the time), my soul will take flight from its earthly mansion. Be ye all comforted, and hereafter, if ye obey God's holy law, ye shall meet me again in a blessed eternity."

As may be supposed, the females wept bitterly; they were distressed, because the good Durweish had ever been kind, indulgent, affectionate, and tender in all the relative situations he held amongst them. He tried many soothing arguments to comfort and console them for some

hours, but without in the least reducing their grief, or moderating their bewailings: they could not, and would not be comforted.

"Well," said the Durweish, "since the separation I have predicted causes you all so much sorrow, it would be better, perhaps, that we part not. I have thought of another method to avoid the pangs of separation; I will offer my prayers this night to the gracious Giver of all good, that He may be pleased to permit ye all to bear me company in death."

"Oh! stay your prayer!" said the wife of the Durweish; "this must not be; for if we all die at once, who will perform the funeral rites, and deposit our bodies in the earth?" The Durweish smiled at his wife's objection, and answered, "This is of no consequence to us, dear wife: the body may be likened to a garment that is thrown off when old; the soul having worn its earthly covering for a season, at the appointed time shakes off the perishable piece of corruption, to enter into a purer state of existence. It matters not if the body have a burial or not; the soul takes no cognizance of

the clay it has quitted. Yet, if it be a matter of great consideration with you, be assured that many pious men and Durweish, whose respect we have enjoyed in life, will not fail to give decent interment to the remains of those they have loved and respected."

This for a moment baffled the wife in her argument; but presently she persuasively urged that her daughters were all young, that they had as yet seen but little of this world, and therefore it would be cruel to take them away so soon; they must desire to see more of this life ere they entered on another state of existence. "Oh, my wife," said the Durweish, "you reason badly; this life hath no joys to be compared with those which the righteous man's hopes lead him to expect in the world beyond the grave. I will assuredly make my promised prayer, if I find a semblance of remaining grief upon separating from me at the appointed time, for our removal to perfect happiness."

"No, no!" was cried by all the assembled family; "do let us remain a little longer here, we are not in a hurry to quit this world."

—"Well, well, be satisfied then," responded the Durweish, "if such is your desire; and hereafter let me not hear a sigh or a murmur from one of you, for my appointed time is drawing to a close; if you will not accompany me, let me, at least, depart in peace."

The people who relate this (and I have heard the anecdote from many) add, that the Durweish Shah Sherif ood deen Mah-mood died at the close of the third week, and on the day and hour he had predicted.

A grandson of this Durweish I have been writing about is still living in India, remarkable for a very retentive memory and propriety of life. I have not met with this gentleman during my residence in India, but have often heard his name mentioned with respect by Meer Hadjee Shaah who knew him well. He says that this Syaad, when but a boy, learned the whole Khoraun by heart in the short space of forty days; he adds, that this person is exemplary in his life, and in his habits and manners humble; that he is truly a servant of God; rejects the mystic tenets of Soofieism;

possesses an enlightened mind, and is a Moollah or Doctor of the Mussulmaun law. I have heard many singular anecdotes of his life, proving his disregard for riches, honours, and the vain pursuits of the worldly-minded. If I recollect right, he once was engaged in the confidential office of Moonshie to a highly talented gentleman at Fort William, from which employment he retired and took up his abode for some time at Lucknow; from whence, it was said, he went to Hydrabaad, where, it is probable, he may still be found in the exercise of a religious course of life. His name is respected by all the good men of his own persuasion, with whom I have been most intimately acquainted.

Conceiving the subject may be interesting to my friends, I will not offer any apology for introducing to your notice a female character of great merit, whose death occurred during my residence in the vicinity of her abode. I was induced to make memorandums of the circumstances which brought the knowledge of her virtues more immediately before the public,

Maulvee Meer Syaad Mahumud succeeded, on the death of his father, in 1822, to the exalted position amongst Mussulmauns of head leader and expounder of the Mahumudan law in the city of Lucknow; he is a person of unassuming manners and extreme good sense, is an upright, honest-hearted, religious man, meriting and receiving the respect and good opinion of all his countrymen capable of appreciating the worthiness of his general deportment. He is esteemed the most learned person of the present age amongst Asiatic scholars; and occupies his time in study and devotion, and in giving gratuitous instruction to youth, at stated hours, in those laws which he makes his own rule of life. Neither is the good Maulvee's fame confined to the city in which he sojourns, as may be gathered from the following anecdote, which exhibits the upright principles of this worthy man, at the same time that it discloses the character of a very amiable female, whose charity was as unbounded as her memory is revered in Furrukhabaad.

"The late Nuwaub of Furrukhabaad was first married to a lady of birth and good fortune, Villoiettee Begum, by whom he was not blessed with a son; but he had other wives, one of whom bore him an heir, who at the present time enjoys the musnud of his father.

"Villoiettee Begum was beautiful in person, and possessed a heart of the most benevolent and rare kind; her whole delight was centred in the exercises of those duties which her religion inculcated; she spent much of her time in prayer, in acquiring a knowledge of the Khoraun, in acts of kindness to her fellow-creatures, and in strict abstinence.

"It was her unvaried custom at meals before she touched a morsel herself, to have twelve portions of food, selected from the choicest viands provided for her use, set apart for as many poor people; and when they had been served, she humbly and sparingly partook of the meal before her. She was possessed of great wealth, yet never expended any portion of it in the extravagances of dress; indeed, so humble was her appearance, that she might

have been mistaken for the meanest of her slaves or domestics. It was her usual custom, whenever she purchased new clothing for her own wear, to lay in a large store for the poor; and it is affirmed, by those who were long intimate with the family, that a supplicant was never known to pass her door without relief. She even sought out, with the aid of a faithful domestic, the modest poor who were restrained by their feelings from intruding their necessities; and her liberal donations were distributed in so kind a manner, that even the pride of birth could never feel distressed when receiving her charitable assistance.

"This lady was much attached to the duties of her religion, and delighted in acquiring instruction from righteous persons of her own faith. She showered favours on all the poor who were reported to live in the fear of God; indeed, such was the liberality, benevolence, and unvaried charity of this good lady, that the news of her death was received by hundreds of people as their greatest earthly calamity. The example of this lady's character

is the more enhanced by reflecting on the retired way in which she was reared and lived, restrained by the customs of her people within the high walls of a zeenahnah, without the advantages of a liberal education or the immediate society of intelligent people. She seems, by all account, to have been a most perfect pattern of human excellence.

"In forming her will (Villoiettee Begum had been a widow several years before her death), she does not appear to have wished a single thing to be done towards perpetuating her name,—as is usual with the great, in erecting lofty domes over the deposited clay of the Mussulmaun,—but her immense wealth was chiefly bequeathed in charitable gifts. The holy and the humble were equally remembered in its distribution. She had been acquainted with the virtues of the good Maulvee of Lucknow, to whom she left a handsome sum of money for his own use, and many valuable articles to fit up the Emaum-baarah for the service of Mahurrum, with a desire that the same should be conveyed to him as soon after her

death as convenient. Her vakeel (agent) wrote to Meer Syaad Mahumud very soon after the lady's death, to apprize him of the bequest Villoiettee Begum had willed to him, and at the same time forwarded the portable articles to him at Lucknow.

"The Maulvee was much surprised, and fancied there must be some mistake in the person for whom this legacy was intended, as the lady herself was entirely unknown to him, and an inhabitant of a station so remote from his own residence as not likely ever to have heard of him. He, however, replied to the vakeel, and wrote also to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, desiring to have a strict inquiry instituted before he could venture to accept the riches of this lady's bounty, presuming that even if he was the person alluded to in her will, that the Begum must have intended him as her almoner to the poor of Lucknow. The good, upright Maulvee acted on the integrity of his heart and desired a strict scrutiny might be instituted into the will of the deceased, which was accordingly made, and he was assured

in reply, that Villoiettee Begum had been long acquainted with his worth, and in her liberal bequest she had decidedly intended the money for his sole use and benefit, in testimony of her respect for his virtuous character. The Maulvee again wrote and requested to be informed by those most intimate with the Begum's way of life, whether she had left unperformed any of the duties incumbent on a member of the faithful, as regards zuckhaut, pilgrimage, the fast, &c.? which not having accomplished, and having ample means, he felt himself bound, in the situation he held, to devote her legacy to the purpose of such duties by proxy (which their law commands) in her name. He was in reply assured that the good Begum had not omitted any part of her duty; she had regularly applied zuckhaut, duly performed the fast, had paid the expenses for poor pilgrims to Mecca (her substitutes); and not until all the scruples of the just Maulvee had been removed would he hear of, or accept the Begum's legacy."

The anecdote I have now given will serve to

illustrate the character of some good people of Hindoostaun of the present day; indeed, the veneration and respect paid by all classes to those men who lead religious lives, is but little changed from the earlier pages of the Mussulmaun history. I have just met with a Durweish anecdote, of former times, that may be worth transcribing, as I have received it from Meer Hadjee Shaah, whose aid I am so much indebted to for subjects with which to amuse my friends.

"Shah ood Dowlah was a Durweish who flourished in the reign of King Shah Jahan at Delhi, but whose fame is known throughout India to the present day. This Durweish was remarkable for his activity of body. It is related, that he was often to be seen at prayer in Delhi, and in three hours after he had transported himself eighty miles off without any visible assistance but his own personal activity on foot. This extraordinary rapidity of movement rendered him an object of veneration; and the general belief was, that he was highly favoured of Heaven, and gifted with superna-

tural power; the life he led was purely religious, with a total disregard of earthly riches.

" The King, Shah Jahan, was a very sensible person, and a great admirer of all that is counted good and excellent in his fellow-men; he was particularly friendly to such men as the Durweish, or others who devoted their lives to religious exercises. He had often heard of Shah ood Dowlah, without ever meeting with him, and on hearing of some singular acts of this Durweish, he was desirous of seeing him, and gave orders accordingly to his Minister, that messengers should be sent in search of the holy man, but as often as they appeared before the Durweish's hut he was invisible; this statement even added to the King's curiosity. On a certain day the King was seated on the story of his palace which overlooked the town and the outskirts beyond the walls, in conversation with his Minister and favourites, when the Durweish was espied at no great distance standing on the broadway; which, when the King knew, he desired messengers might be dispatched to convey the holy man to his presence. ' Your

royal will shall be obeyed,' replied the Minister; 'but your Majesty must be aware that the extent of the circuit from the palace to the outer gate is so great that long before a slave can get to that road, Shah ood Dowlah will be beyond the reach of our summons. With all due submission to your Majesty's better judgment, would it not be more prudent to call him from hence, and persuade him to ascend the wall in a basket suspended to a rope. The King agreed, and the Durweish was hailed. 'Our King, the Protector of the World, commands Shah ood Dowlah's attendance?'—The Durweish, looking up at the summoner, inquired, 'Where is the King?'—'In this apartment,' he was answered. —'How am I to get near him? he is too far off: an old man does not well to climb.'—'Wait a minute,' replied the servant, 'your conveyance shall be prepared.'

"In a few minutes the basket descended from the upper story, by a strong rope, well secured against the probability of accident. The Durweish, — who was covered with a

chudha, or sheet, to keep him from giddiness in the ascent,—seated himself firmly in the basket, and the servants drew him up in safety. He was immediately conveyed to the King's apartment; who, contrary to precedent, rose at his entrance to receive this respected and much-desired guest.

" 'Pray be seated, my friend,' said the King, leading him to the most honoured part of the royal carpet. The Durweish obeyed without a moment's hesitation, to the astonishment of the Vizier, nobles, courtiers, &c., who had never before seen a human being seated in the King's presence, not even one of the most exalted of the nobles. 'I have long desired this happiness,' said the King to the Durweish, 'that I might converse with you.'—'Your Majesty is very gracious to the poor Durweish,' was responded. 'I hear much of your great virtue and good life,' said the King, 'from the world, my subjects.'—'They do but flatter the poor Durweish,' was his reply; adding, 'none can tell what passes in my heart, when they view only my face. I am but a poor Durweish.'

"'I have many questions to ask you,' said the King, 'which I hope to have resolved from your own mouth; but, first, I beg to be informed, what methods you have used in order to acquire that command over selfish feelings, which is displayed in your intercourse with the world? and by what means you have become so enlightened in the ways pleasing to God?'

"The Durweish with a smile of pleasure, and in language calm as respectful, answered in the following words:—'Your Majesty, the Protector of the World, was desirous of becoming personally known to the very meanest of your subjects, the poor Durweish; the opportunity arrived, and you condescended to let down a line of rope to assist your poor subject in the ascent to your presence. With equal condescension you have seated me by your side; and I, the poor Durweish, feel a due sense of the honour conferred on me. Had I been anxious to gain admittance to the Protector of the World, many would have been the difficulties to surmount; your castle is well guarded, your gates innumerable to be passed

ere this place could be reached, and who would have aided the poor Durweish's wishes? But your Majesty had the will, and the power to effect that will; whilst I, who had neither, might have exerted myself for ages without effect. Such then, O King! is the way God draws those whom He wills unto Him. He sees into the hidden recesses of the human heart, and knows every working of mortal minds; He has no difficulty to surmount; for to whom in His mercy He grants evidence of His love, He draws them to Himself in heart, in soul, in mind, with infinitely less effort than thou hast exerted to draw my mortal body within thy palace. It is God who in love and mercy throws the line to man; happy that soul who accepts the offered means, by which he may ascend!' "

Meer Nizaam ood deen lived many years at Lucknow, where he was much esteemed by the religious men of the time; some who survived him have frequently entertained me with anecdotes of that respected Durweish. Out of the many I have heard detailed by them, I

have selected for this place a few of the most interesting :—

A certain King of Delhi (whose name has escaped my recollection) having heard of the remarkable piety of this Durweish, expressed a great desire to see him, and the message was conveyed by a confidential person, instructed to say to the holy man, that his presence was solicited as a favour at Court. The person instructed with the royal message, remarked to Meer Nizaam, when he had agreed to accompany him, that his mean apparel was not suited to appear in the presence of majesty, and offered to provide him with a superior dress.

The Durweish looked steadily in the face of the proposer, and addressed him, " Friend! know you not, that clad in these very garments you deride, I make my daily prayers to Him who is the Creator and Lord of the whole earth, and all that therein is? If I am not ashamed to appear in the presence of my God thus habited, canst thou think I shall deem it needful to change my garments for one who is, at

best but the creature of my Creator? Thinkest thou I would pay more deference to my fellow-man than I have done to my God? No, no; be assured the clothes I wear will not be changed for earthly visits."

This Durweish had a mind and heart so entirely devoted to his Creator, and was so thoroughly purified from earthly vanity, that his every wish was granted as soon as it had been formed in his heart, says one of his many admirers, Meer Eloy Bauxh; who, in proof that he was so gifted, relates the following anecdote which I give in his own words:—

"One day I was conversing with the Durweish, Meer Nizaam, when he told me he could bring me to his door, from my own home, at any hour or time he pleased. I was a little wavering in my belief of his power to do so, and offered some remarks that indicated my doubts. 'Well,' said he in reply, 'you shall be convinced, my friend, ere long, I promise you.'

"A few evenings after this conversation had been held, I was seated on my charpoy, in

meditation,—my usual practice after the evening namaaz,—when a sudden impulse seized my mind, that I must immediately go off to the Durweish who lived at the opposite extremity of this large city (Lucknow). I prepared to set out, and by the time I was ready, the rain burst forth in torrents from the over-charged clouds. Still the impulse was so strong that I cared not for this impediment even, which under ordinary circumstances would have deterred me from venturing out on a dark evening of storm; I wrapped myself up in my labaadah, took a stick and umbrella, and sallied forth in great haste. On reaching the outer gate of my premises, the strong feeling that had impelled me to proceed, vanished from my mind, and I was as strongly urged by an opposite impulse to retire again within my own habitation, where, if I reasoned at all, it was on the unusual changeableness of my fixed resolution, for I never thought about the subject of the Durweish's prediction at the time.

"Some few days after this, I paid Meer Nizaam a visit, and after our usual embrace

and salutations were over, he said to me, 'Well, my friend, are you convinced by this time, that I have the power to bring you to me whenever I wish, by the preparations you made for coming on the evening of such a day?' (mentioning the time and hour accurately).

" 'I remember well my desire to visit you, but why was I deterred from my purpose?' I asked. The Durweish replied, 'Out of pure compassion for the fatigue and pains it would have given you, had you come so far on such a night of rain and tempest. My pity for you altered my wishes, and thereby your purposes. I only wished you to be convinced, and perhaps you are so now.' "

Meer Eloy Bauxh often speaks of this circumstance, and declares he has full confidence that the Durweish in question possessed the power of influencing the minds of others, or attracting them by his wishes to appear before him.

" This Durweish was once applied to by a Mussulmaun, who went regularly for many

days in succession, to watch a favourable moment for soliciting advice and assistance in his then uneasy state of mind. The Mussulmaun's name was Hummoon, since designated Shah, a native of the Upper Provinces of Hindoostaun, in the Lahore district. Hummoon occasionally passing near the river, had frequently observed, amongst the number of Hindoo women, on their way to and from the place of bathing, one young female whose charms riveted his attention. He sometimes fancied that the girl smiled on him; but aware of the strong prejudices of her caste, which prohibits intercourse even, much less marriage, with men of another persuasion, he loved therefore without hope; yet he could not resist, as the opportunity offered, of again and again watching for a glance at the beautiful Hindoo whose person had won his entire affections. Not a word had ever passed between them, but he fancied she sometimes returned his looks of love in her smiles.

"The passion of Hummoon increased daily; he could with difficulty restrain himself within

the prescribed bounds; he longed to address her, and in vain puzzled his imagination for the proper means to adopt, for he knew the edict of her caste had placed a barrier between them of an insurmountable nature. For months he endured all the torments of his perplexing state, and at last resolved on applying to the good Durweish for advice and assistance, whose famed powers had been long the subject of admiration among the Mussulmauns.

"Hummoon went daily to the threshold of the Durweish, and seated himself among the many who, like him, had some favour to ask of the holy man, at the propitious moment when he chose to be visible and disposed to look round upon his petitioning visitors. All waited for a look with the most intense anxiety (for a Durweish does not always notice his courtiers), and happy did he deem himself who was encouraged by the recognition of his eye, to offer his petition by word of mouth. Many such applicants had been favoured by the Durweish, yet Hummoon visited daily without being noticed by the holy man. At length,

however, a look of inquiry was given to the almost despairing Hummoon; thus encouraged, he folded his hands, and bent them forward in a supplicating attitude, told his distresses as briefly as the subject would permit, and concluded his tale of sorrow, by entreating the Durweish would instruct him in the exercise of some prayer by which he might be made happy with the object of his love.

"The Durweish listened attentively to Hummoon's tale; and more, he pitied him, for he felt at all times a due portion of sympathy for the misery of his fellow-creatures, and the singularity of Hummoon's case affected him. He told him he could teach the way to become deserving of having his wishes in this world granted to him, but more he could not answer for; but it would take him a considerable time to practice the devotions necessary to his future peace, which were of the heart, not the mere repetition of a prayer by the lips. Hummoon readily assured the Durweish, he was willing to be guided by his advice and instruction; adding, that he would patiently persevere for

any length of time necessary, so that at last his object might be accomplished.

"Hummoon commenced under the tuition of the Durweish the practice of devotional exercises. He forsook (as was required of him) all vain pursuits, worldly desires, or selfish gratifications; day and night was devoted to religious study and prayer, and such was the good effect of his perseverance and progressive increase of faith, that at the end of some few months he had entirely left off thinking of the first object of his adoration, his whole heart and soul being absorbed in contemplations of, and devotion to, his Creator. At the end of a year, no trace or remembrance of his old passion existed; he became a perfect Durweish, retired to a solitary place, where under the shade of trees he would sit alone for days and nights in calm composure, abstracted from every other thought but that of his God, to whom he was now entirely devoted."

I am told that this Durweish, Hummoon Shah, is still living in the Lahore province, a pattern of all that is excellent in virtue and devotion.

LETTER XXV.

Mussulmaun Devotees.—The Chillubdhaars.—Peculiar mode of worship.—Propitiatory offerings.—Supposed to be invulnerable to fire.—The Maadhaars or Duffelees.—Character of the founder.—Pilgrimage to his tomb.—Females afflicted on visiting it.—Effects attributed to the violation of the sanctuary by a foreigner.—Superstition of the Natives.—Anecdote of Shiekh Suddoo and the Genii.—The way of the world exemplified, a Khaunie (Hindoostaunie fable).—Moral fable.—The King who longed for fruit.

THERE are many classes of men amongst the Mussulmauns, who either abjure the world or seem to do so, independent of those denominated Durweish;—such as the religious mendicants, &c., who have no earthly calling, and derive their subsistence from the free-will offerings of their neighbours, or the bounty of the rich, who from respect for their humble

calling, and a hope of benefit from their prayers, or rather from the veneration of Mussulmauns towards such of their faith as have renounced the world for the service of God.

The Chillubdhaars are a well-known class of wanderers; their founder was a Syaad, Ahmud Kaabeer, of whom many wonderful things are related sufficient to impress on the weak mind a belief in his supernatural ascendancy. His presumed powers are said to have been chiefly instrumental in curing the sick or in removing temporal afflictions; but his effectual prayers in behalf of people in difficulty, they say, surpassed those of any other of the whole tribes of devotees that have at any age existed. His admirers and followers speak of him as having been invulnerable to fire. In his life time he had forty disciples or pupils constantly with him; at his death these forty separated, each in the course of time accumulating his forty pupils, after the pattern of their founder, who also eventually became leaders, and so on, until at the present time, it is conjectured, there are few

places in Asia exempt from one or more detachments of these Chillubdhaar practical beggars who are much admired by the weak; and although they profess the same tenets and rules of life with their founder, Syaad Ahmud Kaabeer, yet, I believe, no one gives the Chillubdhaars of the present period credit for possessing either the virtues or the power of that man who set them so many bright examples; nevertheless, they are applied to on emergencies by the ignorant and the credulous of the present day, courted by the weak, and tolerated by all.

They all practice one plan whenever called upon to remove the difficulties of any person who places sufficient confidence in their ability. On such occasions, a young heifer, two years old, is supplied by the person having a request to make, after which a fire of charcoal is made in an open space of ground, and the animal sacrificed according to Mussulmaun form. The tender pieces of meat are selected, spitted, and roasted over the

fire, of which when cooked, all present are requested to partake. Whilst the meat is roasting, the Chillubdhaars beat time with a small tambourine to a song or dirge expressive of their love and respect to the memory of the departed saint, their founder and patron, and a hymn of praise to the Creator.

The feast concluded, whilst the fire of charcoal retains a lively heat, these devotees commence dancing, still beating their tambourines and calling out with an audible voice, "There is but one God! — Mahumud is the Prophet of God!" Then they sing in praise of Ali, the descendants of the Prophet, and, lastly, of Syaad Ahmud Kaabeer their beloved saint. Each then puts his naked foot in the fire: some even throw themselves upon it,—their associates taking care to catch them before they are well down,—others jump into the fire and out again instantly; lastly, the whole assembly trample and kick the remaining embers about, whilst a spark remains to be quenched by this

means. These efforts, it is pretended, are sufficient to remove the difficulties of the persons supplying the heifer and the charcoal.

These mendicants live on public favour and contribution; they wear clothes, are deemed harmless, never ask alms, but are always willing to accept them, and have no laws of celibacy, as is the case with some wandering beggars in India, who are naked except the wrapper; sometimes they settle, making fresh converts, but many wander from city to city, always finding people disposed to administer to their necessities. They are distinguished from other sects, by each individual carrying a small tambourine, and wearing clothing of a deep buff colour.

There are another set of wandering mendicants, who are called Madhaar beggars, or the Duffelees, by reason of the small hand-drum they carry with them. These are the disciples of the sainted Maadhaar, whose tomb is visited annually by little short of a million of people, men, women, and children, at a place called Muckunpore, about twenty koss from Cawnpore.

Maadhaar was esteemed in his lifetime a most perfect Durweish, and his admirers speak of the power he then possessed as still existing ; in that his pure spirit at stated periods hovers near his last earthly remains, where the common people make a sort of pilgrimage to entreat his influence in their behalf. A mayllah (fair) is the consequence of this annual pilgrimage, which continues, I think, seventeen days in succession, and brings together, from many miles distant, the men of business, the weak-minded, and the faithful devotees of every class in the Upper Provinces.

From the respect paid to the memory of Maadhaar, and the expected influence of his spirit at the shrine, the ignorant people bring their sons to receive the saint's blessing on their tender years. The man of business also presents himself before it, desirous to insure a share of success at the fair, and ultimate prosperity at home. The devotee visits the shrine from a desire to increase in true wisdom by the reflected light of the Maadhaar Durweish's purer spirit. Women having made vows to

visit the shrine, come to fulfil it at this period, if their hopes be realized in the birth of a son; and others to entreat his influence that their daughters may be suitably married; in short, all who assemble at this mayllah have some prayer to offer, or acknowledgments to make; for they depend on the abundant power and influence of the saint's spirit to supply their several wants or desires.

At the shrine of this saint, a descendant, or as is suspected often in such cases, a pretended relative, takes his station to collect, with all the appearance of sanctity and humility, the nuzzas offered at the shrine of Maadhaar. The amount so collected is enormous, if credit be given to the reports in circulation; for all visitors are expected to present an offering, and most of the pilgrims do it for conscience sake. I knew a Mussulmaun who went from curiosity to this mayllah; he was accosted rather rudely as he was quitting the tomb, without leaving a nuzza; he told the guardian of the tomb he had presented the best nuzza he possessed, in a prayer for the soul of the departed; (as com-

manded every Mussulmaun should offer when drawing near the tomb of one of his own faith).

I have conversed with a remarkably devout person, on the numerous extraordinary stories related of Maadhaar's life, and the subsequent influence of his tomb. He told me that women can never, with safety to themselves, enter the mausoleum containing his ashes; they are immediately seized with violent pains as if their whole body was immersed in flames of fire. I spoke rather doubtingly on this subject, upon which he assured me that he had known instances of one or two women who had imprudently defied the danger, and intruded within the mausoleum, when their agony was extreme, and their sufferings for a long time protracted, although they eventually recovered.

Another still more remarkable circumstance has been related to me by the Natives, for the truth of which I cannot venture to vouch, although I have no reason to doubt the veracity of the narrators.

"A party of foreigners, encamped near the fair, wished to see what was going on at

this far-famed mayllah, and for the purpose of gratifying their curiosity, halted on a certain day in the vicinity of the Durgah, when the place was much thronged by the various pilgrims to that shrine. The party dined in their tent, but drank more wine than was consistent with propriety, and one was particularly overcome. When they sallied forth, at the close of the day, to visit this saint's tomb, their approach was observed by the keepers, who observing how very unfit the strangers appeared to enter the sanctuary of other men's devotions,—the hallowed ground that was by them respected,—the head-keeper very civilly advanced as they moved towards the entrance, requesting that they would desist from entering in their apparent condition, contrary to the rules of the place and people. The convivial party then drew back, without contesting the point, excepting the one most disguised in liquor, who asserted his right to enter wherever and whenever he thought good, nor would he be controlled by any man in India.

"The keepers spoke very mildly to the tipsy

foreigner, and would have persuaded him he was doing wrong, but he was not in a state to listen to any argument dissuading him from his determined purpose; they warned him that a severe punishment must follow his daring, as he pushed past them and reeled into the mausoleum, triumphing at his success. He had approached the tomb, when he was immediately seized with trembling, and sank senseless on the floor; his friends without, observing his situation, advanced and were assisted by the keepers in removing the apparently inanimate body to the open air: water was procured, and after considerable delay, returning symptoms of life were discovered. When able to speak, he declared himself to be on the eve of death, and in a few short hours he breathed his last." The unhappy man may have died of apoplexy.

The ignorant part of the population of Hindoostaun hold a superstitious belief in the occasional visitations of the spirit of Sheikh Suddoo. It is very common to hear the vulgar people say if any one of their friends is afflicted

with melancholy, hypochondria, &c., "Ay, it is the spirit of Sheikh Suddoo has possessed him." In such cases the spirit is to be dislodged from the afflicted person by sweetmeats, to be distributed among the poor; to which is added, if possible, the sacrifice of a black goat. I am not quite sure that the night blindness, with which the lower orders of Natives are frequently attacked, has not some superstitious allusion attached to it; but the only remedy I have ever heard prescribed for it is, that the patient should procure the liver of a young kid, which must be grilled over the fire, and eaten by the afflicted person. The story of this Sheikh Suddoo, which is often related in the zeenahnahs of the Mussulmauns, is as follows:—

"Sheikh Suddoo was a very learned man, but a great hypocrite, who passed days and nights in the mosque, and was fed by the charitable, his neighbours, from such viands as they provided daily for the poor traveller, and those men who forsake the world. The Sheikh sometimes wandered into a forest seldom penetrated by the foot of man, where,

on a certain day, he discovered a copper cup, curiously engraved with characters which he tried in vain with all his learning to decipher. The Sheikh returned with the cup to the mosque, regretting that the characters were unknown to him; but as he had long desired to have a good-sized lamp, he fancied from the peculiar shape of his prize, that it would answer the very purpose, and the same night he exultingly prepared his charaagh (a light) in the engraved vessel.

"The moment he had ignited one wick, he was surprised by the appearance of a figure, resembling a human being, standing before him, 'Who art thou,' he demanded, 'intruding at this hour on the privacy of a hermit?'—'I come,' replied the figure, 'on the summons from your lamp. That vessel, and whoever possesses it, has four attendants, one of whom you see before you, your slave. We are Genii, and can only be summoned by the lighting up of the vessel now before you; the number of your slaves will be in due attendance, always guided by as many wicks as it may be your pleasure to

light up for our summons. Demand our attendance, at any hour you please, we are bound to obey.'

"The Sheikh inquired if he or his companions possessed any power. 'Power,' replied the Genii, 'belongs to God alone, the Creator of all things visible and invisible; but by His permission we are enabled to perform, to a certain extent, any reasonable service our master requires.'

"The Sheikh soon put their abilities to the test, and satisfied himself that these agents would aid and assist him in raising his character with the world (for he coveted their praise). 'They would,' he thought, 'assuredly believe he was a pious Durweish, when he could convince them by a ready compliance with their requests, which must seem to follow his prayers, and which he should be able to further now by the aid of the Genii.'

"The pretended holy man employed his attendant Genii fully; many of his demands on their services were difficult, and too often revolting to them; yet whilst he retained the lamp in

his possession, they were bound to obey his commands. He once heard of a king's daughter, who was young and beautiful; he therewith summoned the Genii, and required that they should convey the princess to him. They reluctantly obeyed his command, and the princess was the Sheikh's unwilling companion in the mosque. On another occasion, he desired the Genii to bring without delay, to the ground in front of his present abiding place, a very curious mosque situated many leagues distant, the stones of which were so nicely cemented together, that no trace of the joining could be discovered. The Genii received this command with regret, but they were obliged to obey, and departed from the Sheikh's presence to execute his unworthy orders.

"It happened that the mosque which the Sheikh coveted was the retreat of a righteous man, who had separated from the world to serve his God, venerable in years and devout in his duties. The Genii commenced their labour of removing the mosque; the good man who was at his devotions within, fancied an

earthquake was shaking the building to its foundation, but as he trusted in God for preservation, he breathed a fervent prayer as he remained prostrate before Him.

" The shaking of the mosque continued, and he was inspired by a sudden thought that induced him to believe some supernatural agency was employed against the holy house; he therefore, called out, 'Who and what are ye, who thus sacrilegiously disturb the house of God!' The Genii appeared, and made known to what order of beings they belonged, whose servants they were, and the purpose of their mission.

" 'Begone this instant!' replied the pious man, with a tone of authority that deprived them of strength: 'a moment's delay, and I will pray that you be consumed by fire! Know ye not that this is a mosque, holy, and erected wherein to do service to the great and only God? Would Sheikh Suddoo add to his enormities by forcing the house of God from its foundation? Away, ye servants of the

wicked Sheikh, or meet the fire that awaits you by a moment's further delay!'

"The Genii fled in haste to their profane employer, whose rage was unbounded at their disobedience, as he termed their return without the mosque; he raved, stormed, and reviled his slaves in bitter sarcasms, when they, heartily tired of the Sheikh's servitude, caught up the copper vessel, and, in his struggle to resist the Genii, he was thrown with violence on the ground, when his wicked soul was suddenly separated from his most impure body."

This story receives many alterations and additions, agreeable to the talent and the inclination of the person relating it in Native society; but as there once was a person on whose history it has been founded, they do not denominate it fabulous or khaunie. The following, which I am about to copy from a translation of my husband's, is really a mere fable; and, however trifling and childish it may appear, I feel bound to insert it, as one among those things which serves to illustrate

the character of the people I have undertaken to describe; merely adding, that all these fables prove an unceasing entertainment in the zeenahnah, with females who cannot themselves read, either for amusement or instruction:—

"A certain man was travelling on horseback through an immense forest; and when he came to a particular spot, he observed fire consuming some bushes, in the centre of which was a monstrous large snake. The Snake was in danger of being destroyed by the flames, so he called to the Traveller, in a voice of despair—'Oh! good Sahib, save me, or I perish!'

"The Traveller was a very tender-hearted creature, prone to pity the painful sufferings of every living creature, whether man or animal; and therefore began to devise some scheme for liberating the Snake from the devouring flames. His horse's corn bag, which was made of leather, hung dangling by a rope from the crupper; this, he thought, would be the best thing he could offer to the distressed Snake. Accordingly, holding fast by the rope,

he threw the bag towards the flames, and desired the Snake to hasten into it, who immediately accepted the offered aid, and the Traveller drew him out of his perilous situation.

" No sooner was the Snake released from danger, than, ungrateful for the services he had received from the Traveller, he sprang towards him, with the purpose of wounding his deliverer. This, however, he failed of accomplishing, for the Traveller drew back in time to escape the attack; and demanded of his enemy his reasons for such base ingratitude, saying—'Have I not saved your life by my prompt assistance? What a worthless reptile art thou! Is this thy mode of rewarding benefits?'—'Oh!' said the Snake, 'I am only imitating the way of the world; who ever thinks of returning good for good? No, no! every benefit received by the creature of this world is rewarded to the donor by an ungrateful return. I tell you, good Traveller, I am only following the example set me in the way of the world.'

" " 'I shall not take your word for it,' said

the Traveller in reply; 'but if I can be convinced that what you say is true, you shall be welcome to bite me.'—'Agreed,' said the Snake; and off they set together in search of adventures.

"The first object they met was a large Pepul-tree whose branches spread out an inviting shelter to the weary traveller to repose under, without rent or tax. The Pepul-tree was asked, 'Whether it was consistent with the way of the world for the Snake to try to wound the man who had preserved him from destruction.'

"The Pepul-tree replied, 'To follow in the way of the world, I should say the Snake was justified. A good return is never now-a-days tendered for a benefit received by mere worldlings, as I can bear witness by my own sufferings. Listen to my complaint:—Here in this solitary jungle, where neither hut nor mansion is to be found, I spread forth my well-clothed branches,—a welcome shelter to the passing traveller from the burning heat of the noontide sun, or the deluge poured out from

the overcharged cloud;—under my cover they cook their meal, and my falling leaves supply them with fuel, as also with a bed on which they may recline their weary limbs. Think you, when they have thus profited by the good I have done them, that they are grateful for my services?—Oh, no! the ingrates despoil the symmetry of my form, break off my branches with violence, and trudge off triumphantly with the spoil which may serve them for fuel for cooking at their next stage. So you see the Snake is right; he has but followed the way of the world.'

" The Snake exultingly led the way in search of other proofs by which he should be justified. They fell in with a man who was by occupation a camel-driver. The Man being made acquainted with the point at issue, desired to be heard, as he could prove by his own tale that the Snake's ingratitude was a true picture of the way of the world:—'I was the sole proprietor of a very fine strong camel, by whose labour I earned a handsome competence for each day's provision of myself and family, in conveying

goods and sometimes travellers from place to place, as my good fortune served me. On a certain day, returning home through an intricate wood, I drew near to a poor blind man who was seated on the ground lamenting his hard fate. Hearing my camel's feet advance, he redoubled his cries of distress, calling loudly for help and assistance. His piteous cries won upon the tender feelings of my heart; so I drew near to inquire into his situation. He told me with tears and sobs, that he was travelling on foot from his home to visit his relations at the next town; that he had been attacked by robbers, his property taken from him by violence, and that the boy, his guide, was forced from him by the banditti as a slave; and here, added the blind man, must I perish, for I can neither see my way home, nor search for food; in this lone place my friends will never think to seek me, and my body will be the feast for jackals ere the morning dawns.

"'The poor man's story made so deep an impression on my mind, that I resolved on assisting him; accordingly my camel was

made to kneel down, I seated the blind man safely on my beast, and set off with him to the city he called his home. Arrived at the city gates, I lowered my camel, and offered to assist the poor man in descending from his seat; but, to my astonishment, he commenced abusing me for my barefaced wickedness, collected a mob around us, by his cries for help from his persecutor, declared himself the master of the camel, and accused me of attempting to rob him now as I had done his brother before.

"'So plausible was his speech—so apparently innocent and just his demands - - that the whole collected populace believed I was actually attempting to defraud the blind man of his property, and treated me in consequence with great severity. I demanded to be taken before the Kauzy of the city. Yes, yes, said the blind man, we will have you before the Kauzy; and away we went, accompanied by the crowd who had espoused the blind man's cause against me.

"'The blind man preferred his claim, and

advocated his own cause with so many arguments of apparent justice, that I was not allowed a voice in the business; and in the end I was sentenced to be thrust out of the city as a thief and vagabond, with a threat of still greater punishment if I dared to return. Here ends my sad tale; and you may judge for yourself, oh, Traveller! how truly the Snake has proved to you that he follows but the way of the world!'

* * * * *

"As they pursued their way in search of further conviction, they met a Fox, whose wisdom and sagacity was consulted on the important question. Having heard the whole history with becoming gravity, the Fox addressed the Traveller:—'You can have no good reason to suppose, Mr. Traveller, that in your case there should be any deviation from the general rule. I have often been obliged to suffer the vilest returns from friends whom I have been active to oblige; but I am rather curious to see the way you effected the release of the Snake from

the fire, for I will candidly confess myself so stupid as not clearly to understand the description you have both attempted to give. I shall judge the merits of the case better if I see it performed.'

"To this proposal the Snake and Traveller agreed: and when the corn bag was thrown towards the Snake, he crept into it as before. The Fox then called out to the Traveller 'Draw quickly!' he did so, and the Snake was caught by a noose in the cord which the Fox had contrived unperceived, by which the Snake was secured fast round the middle. 'Now,' said the Fox, 'bruise your enemy, and thus relieve the world of one base inhabitant!' "

This fable is frequently enlarged and embellished by the reciter to a considerable extent, by introducing many different objects animate and inanimate, to elucidate the question before the Fox arrives, who is generally brought in to moral the fable.

I trust to be excused for transcribing the following moral fable which was translated from the Persian by my husband for my amuse-

ment, bearing the title of "The King who longed for an unknown fruit:"—

"A certain King was so great a tyrant, that his servants and subjects dreaded each burst of anger, as it were the prelude to their own annihilation. The exercise of his will was as absolute as his power; he had only to command, and obedience followed, however difficult or inconvenient to the people who served under him.

"This tyrant dreamed one night that he was eating fruit of an extraordinary flavour and quality. He had never in his whole life seen fruit of the kind, neither had he heard such described by travellers; yet when he ruminated on the subject in the morning he was resolved to have fruit of the same sort his dream presented, or his people should suffer for his disappointment.

"The King related his dream, and with it his commands to his Vizier, his courtiers, and attendants, that fruit of the same description should be brought before him within seven days; in default of which he vowed solemnly

that death should be the portion of his Vizier, his courtiers, and servants. They all knew the King meant to be obeyed, by the earnestness of his manner, and they trembled under the weight of his perplexing orders, each, therefore, was speedily engaged in the all-important search. The whole empire was canvassed, and all the business of the Court was suspended to satisfy the whim of the Monarch, without avail; terror and dismay marked the countenance of the whole city—for certain death awaited these servants of the Court—and there was but now one day left to their hopes. The city, the suburbs, the provinces, had been searched; disappointment followed from every quarter, and the threatened party gave up their hearts to despair.

"A certain Durweish knowing the consternation of the people, and feeling pity for their unmerited sufferings, sent for the Vizier privately. 'I am not,' said the Durweish, 'by any means anxious to please the vanity and silly wishes of your master, the King, but I do hear with pity the state of despair you and your

fellows are reduced to, by the unsuccessful results of your search after the fruit, and the certain consequences which are to follow your failure.'

"Then giving the Vizier a fragment of a broken pitcher, on which was ciphered unknown characters, he told him to take it with him to a certain tomb, situated in the suburbs of the royal city, (directing him to the spot with great exactness), and casting the fragment on the tomb, to follow the directions he would there receive; he further desired him to be secret, to go alone, and at midnight.

"The now hope-inspired Vizier went as desired at midnight, and cast the fragment on the tomb, which instantly opened to him. He then descended a flight of steps, from the foot of which, at a little distance, he first espied a light not larger than a taper, but which increased as he went on until the full splendour of noonday succeeded. Proceeding with confidence, revived hope cheered his heart, anticipating that by success so many lives besides his own would be preserved through his

humble endeavours; and that life would be more than doubly dear, as the prospect of losing the gift had embittered the last few days so severely.

"The Vizier passed on courageously through halls, corridors, and apartments of magnificent structure, decorated and furnished in the most perfect style of elegant neatness. Every thing he saw bore marks of splendour. The King's palace was then remembered in all its costliness, to be as much inferior to the present scene as could be detected by the lapidary's correct eye, when comparing the diamond with the pebble.

"He was perfectly entranced as he gazed on the emerald gate, through which he had to pass to enter a garden of luxuriant beauty, where every shrub, plant, flower, and fruit teemed with richness. In the centre of a walk an old man was seated in a chair of burnished gold, clad in the costume of the country, who seemed to be engaged in breathing the sweet odours by which he was surrounded with a calm and tranquil countenance of joy. 'I know your business,' said the possessor of this paradise, to the

Vizier as he advanced towards him; 'you are come to obtain fruit from this tree, which bows its branches to the earth with the weight and number of its burden. Take one only; this is the fruit your master's dream pictured to his fancy.'

"Full of joy at the prospect of release from the dreaded anger of his royal master, the Vizier hastily plucked the fruit, and retreated by the way he came, without waiting to inquire what the old man meant by an exclamation he uttered at parting, which at the time seemed of lesser import than he afterwards imagined; but 'Alas, the world!' was recalled to his memory on his way back to the palace, and haunted his mind so strongly that he became restless and uneasy, even after the King had conferred honours and favours innumerable on him for his successful efforts in procuring that fruit which had never before been seen by any creature on earth but by the King, and by him only in a dream. 'Alas, the world!' was like a dark envelope over every attempt to be cheer-

ful; an impenetrable cloud seemed to pervade the Vizier's mind; he could think of nothing but the parting words of the old man, and his own folly in not inquiring his meaning.

"The Vizier at last went to the same Durweish who had befriended him in his hour of need, related to him the obstacle to his enjoyment of the blessings and honours which had crowned his success, and hoped from this holy-minded man to ascertain the meaning of that perplexing sentence, 'Alas, the world!' The Durweish could not, or would not explain the old man's meaning; but willing to do the Vizier all possible service, he proposed giving him again the necessary passport to the inhabitant of the garden.

"The fragment of a pitcher was again traced with the mystic characters, and with this in his hand the Vizier at midnight sought the tomb, where he found as easy access as on the former occasion. Every thing he saw seemed doubly beautiful to his imagination since his former visit. He entered by the emerald gate and found the old man enjoying the magnificent

and sense-devouring scene, with as much delight as mortals are wont to show when content fills the heart of man.

"'I know your second errand, my friend,' said the old man, 'and am quite as willing to oblige you as on your first visit. Know then, Vizier, that whilst an inhabitant of earth, I followed the humble occupation of a village barber; by shaving and paring nails I earned my daily bread, and maintained my family. Sometimes I collected ten pice in my day of labour from house to house, and if twelve crowned my efforts I was fortunate.

"'Many years passed over my head in this way, when one day I was less successful in my calling, and but half my usual earnings was all I had gained. On my way home I was ruminating on the scantiness of the meal likely to be procured by five pice for my family of seven people; the season was one of such great scarcity, that ten pice on other days had been of late barely sufficient to procure our daily food; and even with twelve we thought our wants had been but inade-

quately supplied. I went on grieving,—more for my family than myself, it is true,—and could have cried at the thought of the small portion of bread and dhall I should see allotted to each individual dependant on me.

"'In my progress towards home, whilst regretting my poverty, I saw an unfortunate beggar, whose earnest entreaty seemed to make no impression on those who passed him by; for, in truth, when money is scarce and corn dear, people's hearts grow somewhat cold to the distresses of those who have no claim by kindred ties. But with me it was otherways: my scantiness seemed to make me more tender to the sorrows of my fellow-creatures. Poor soul, said I to myself, thou art starving, and no one gives ear to thy complaints; now if I take home this scanty produce of my day's labour, it will not give a meal to all my household; besides, they dined with me tolerably well yesterday. We shall not starve by one day's fasting; to-morrow Divine Providence may send me in the way of more bearded men than I have met to-day. I am resolved

this poor man shall have the benefit of a good meal for once, which he supplicates for in the name of God.

" 'I then went to the beggar and threw the five pice into his upheld wrapper. There brother, said I, it is all I have; go, make yourself happy in a good meal, and remember me in your prayers. May Heaven give you plenty in this world and bless your soul in the next! was his only response. That prayer was heard, for during my further sojourn on earth abundance crowned my board; and here, it is unnecessary to remark on the bounties by which you perceive I am surrounded.

" 'That I said *Alas, the world!* was from the reflection that I did but one act of real charity whilst I remained in it, and see what an abundance rewards me here. Had I known how such things are rewarded hereafter, I should have been more careful to have embraced the passing opportunities, while I walked with my fellow-man on earth. That I said, *Alas, the world!* to you, was an intended admonition to mankind; to convince them of the blessings

bestowed in this world of bliss eternal, in reward for every proper use to which the benefits they received in their probationary state of existence may have been devoted. Go, friend! and profit by the example I present of heavenly rewards! Persevere in a course of practical charity in that world you still inhabit; and secure, whilst you may, the blessed rewards of eternity!' "

LETTER XXVI.

Superstition of the Natives.—Fair annually kept by Hindoos.—Supposed practice of witchcraft by an old woman.—Assaulted by an infuriated populace.—Rescued by a Native gentleman.—He inquires their reasons for persecuting her.—Is instrumental in appeasing their malignity.—Endeavours to remove their prejudice.—Proneness of Asiatics to superstition.—Opinion of a Mussulmaun on the influence of evil spirits.—Account of a woman possessed by an evil spirit.—Dialogue with her during the paroxysms of her affliction.—Means used for her recovery.—Further allusions to the false notions of the Natives respecting supernatural agency.

ALL the Natives of Hindoostaun appear to me to be, more or less, tinctured with superstitious notions, which, in many instances, are so grafted in their nature as to resist every attempt made to root out by arguments the folly of this great weakness.

I hope to be forgiven for introducing in this Letter a few anecdotes and occurrences, which may illustrate that faulty side of the character of a people who have not derived those advantages which are calculated to displace superstition from the mind of man;—in a word, they are strangers to that Holy volume which teaches better things.

A fair had been held at Lucknow one afternoon, not immediately within our view, but the holiday folks passed our house on the road to and from the scene of action. This fair or mayllah is visited by all ranks and classes of Natives; but it is strictly a Hindoo festival annually kept up in remembrance of the celebrated Kornea, of Hindoo mythologic celebrity, who according to their tradition, when but a child, on a certain day killed with his slender arm a great tyrant, the giant Khaunce. Had there ever existed a suspicion that the Hindoos sprang from any of the tribes of Israel, I should have imagined the event they celebrate might have reference to the act of David, who with his single arm

destroyed Goliah of Gath. This, however, can hardly be supposed, although the similarity is remarkably striking.

The figure of Khaunce is made up of bamboo and paper, representing a human being of gigantic stature, and bearing a most fierce countenance, with some certain appendages, as horns, tail, &c., to render the figure more disgusting. It is placed near the bank of the river Goomtie, in a conspicuous situation, for the wonder and admiration of some, the terror of the weak, and the satisfaction of the believers in the fabled story of Kornea and his supposed supernatural power.

Kornea is represented by a little boy, dressed in costly apparel, who is conveyed in grand procession, seated on an elephant, and surrounded by attendants on horseback, with bands of music, and a multitude of followers, through the principal streets of the city to the chosen spot where Khaunce is placed to be attacked by the child.

When the farce is properly prepared for the attack, the child, I am told,—for I have

never seen the ceremony, — takes aim from his well-ornamented bow, and with a single arrow sends the monstrous giant into the river, whilst the shouts of the multitude declare the victory of Kornea, and the destruction of the enemy to the repose of mankind. The figure, I should have remarked, is made up of parts merely placed on each other, so that the force of an arrow is sufficient to dislodge the lofty erection as readily as a pack of cards in a mimic castle may be levelled by a breath. The mayllah concludes when the floating members of the figure have glided with the stream out of sight.

A party of poor weak-minded mortals, pedestrians, but by their dress respectable people, returning from this day's mayllah when the evening was well advanced, suddenly halted near my house: my attention was soon aroused by violent screams, and exclamations of "Seize her! seize her! she is eating my heart!" accompanied by all those indications of fear and pain, that did not fail to excite my sympathy; for I could not comprehend what

was the matter and imagined the poor man had been wounded by the hand of an assassin.

A crowd quickly assembled, and a great bustle ensued; I was really alarmed, and the tumult of voices continuing for some minutes, we distinctly heard the loud cries of a coarse female voice who seemed to be in great danger of losing her life by the rough treatment of a lawless rabble; this induced a Native gentleman of our family to venture out, to ascertain if possible the cause of the excitement, and also to endeavour to assuage the angry feelings of the turbulent party. His appearance amongst them produced the desired effect, they were silenced by his command; and when the man whose alarming screams had first assailed us, was brought before him, he found that he was a man of great respectability amongst the shopkeepers of the city, with a child of four years old in his arms, or rather I should say the child was seated astride on his father's hip, the arm encircling the child's body, as is the general manner of nursing amongst all classes of the Natives.

On being questioned as to the cause of his raising the tumult, he declared that he was walking quietly on the roadway with his party, when the old woman (who was in custody) had touched him as he passed, when immediately his heart sickened, and he was sensible she had bewitched him, for she was still devouring his heart and feasting on his vitals. "I will certainly kill her!" he added, "if she does not restore me to myself and my child likewise!"—"When was your child attacked?"—"About four days since," answered the angry father.

"Good man!" replied my friend; "you must be under the influence of delusion, since you told me just now, the woman is a stranger to you, and that you never saw her before; how could she have bewitched your child then four days ago? I am sure weakening fears or illness has taken possession of your better feelings; the poor creature looks not like one who possesses the power you ascribe to her."

The old woman threw herself at the feet of my friend, and implored his protection reite-

rating her gratitude to him as her preserver from the fury of an angry populace, who had already beaten her with slippers on her head, as a prelude to their future harsh intentions towards her. She stretched out her hands to touch him and bless him, as is the custom with the lower orders of women to their superior of either sex, but the multitude insisted she should not be allowed to let her unhallowed hands fall on the good Mussulmaun gentleman; in a second was to be heard the invocations of Hindoos and Mussulmauns, on their several sources of supreme aid, to save the gentleman from her power, for all the mob felt persuaded the old woman was a witch.

"Be assured you are mistaken, I, at least, have no fears that her touch can harm me;" responded my friend. "Exercise your reason —is she not a human being like ourselves? True she is old and ugly, but you are really wicked in accusing and ill-treating the poor wretch." They were silenced for a few minutes, then declared she must be a witch, for her feet were crooked, she was desired

to exhibit them, and they were found to be perfectly good straight feet.

My friend inquired of the old woman who she was; she answered, "A poor mazoorie (corn-grinder), my husband and my sons are grass-cutters, our abode is in the serai (inn for travellers), we are poor, but honest people." —"You see, Sir," said my friend to the accusing person, "your own weak fears have imposed upon your mind. This woman cannot have done you any injury; let her depart quietly to her home without farther annoyance."

"No!" replied the accuser, "she must satisfy me she is not a witch, or worse than that, by allowing me to pluck a few hairs from her head."—"What benefit do you propose to yourself by this measure?"—"Why I shall relieve myself from her power over me, by possessing hairs plucked from her head, on which my friends will exercise certain prayers, and thus the craft she has used to bewitch me will be dissolved, and I shall be restored to myself again."

Willing as my friend was to get the poor woman released from the hands of the accusing party, and finding reason or argument of no avail in turning them from their purpose to detain her, the terms were acceded to on the one part, provided the woman herself was willing to comply, to which, when she was asked, she replied, "I am not the wretched creature my accuser imagines, and therefore can have no objection, on condition that I may be allowed afterwards to return to my home in peace."

The poor old head was now in danger of being plucked of its white hairs by the surrounding crowd, whose extravagant desire to possess the, to them, invaluable specific against witchcraft—for they still believed she was actually a witch—led them to overlook humanity and feeling; but the peacemaker's voice was again heard, commanding the crowd to desist, and they should all be gratified, when the scissors he had sent a servant to fetch, might enable them to possess the prize without inflicting pain on the poor persecuted woman.

Whilst this was in agitation, and before the scissors were used, several well-armed soldiers, attracted by the appearance of a riot, had made their way to the scene of contention, who recognizing the old woman as the mother and wife of their three grass-cutters, immediately took the poor old soul under their protection, and conveyed her safely from her tormentors. My friend was very well satisfied to resign his charge to their guardianship, and not a little pleased that he had been instrumental in preserving a fellow-creature from the lawless hands of the foolishly superstitious of his countrymen.

It is lamentable to witness how powerful an ascendancy superstition sways over the minds of Asiatics generally. The very wisest, most learned, most religious, even, are more or less tinctured with this weakness; and, I may add, that I have hardly met with one person entirely free from the opinion that witchcraft and evil agency are in the hands of some, and often permitted to be exercised on their neighbours. The truly religious people declare to me, that they

only are preserved from such calamities who can place their whole reliance on the power and goodness of God alone; Who, they are persuaded, will never suffer His faithful servants to be persecuted by the evil one in any shape, or under any mysterious agency. Perfect dependance on Divine Providence is the Mussulmauns only safeguard, for they declare it to be their belief that evil agency exists still, as it did in the first ages of the world. Faith and trust in God can alone preserve them; when that fails, or if they have never learned to rely on Him for protection, they are necessarily exposed to the influence of that evil agency by which so many have suffered both in body and soul amongst their country-people.

The return of our friend, with the explanation of the scene I had witnessed from my window, led me to inquire very minutely into the opinion and general belief of the Mussulmauns on such subjects. A sensible, clever gentleman of that persuasion then present, told me that there could be no doubt witchcraft was often practised in Lucknow, detailing

things he had often heard, about the wicked amongst human beings who practised muntah (incantations); and perhaps would have explained the motives and the acquired power if I had been disposed to listen. I inquired of my friend, as he had always appeared a religious person, whether he really believed in magic, genii, evil agency, &c. He told me, that he did believe certainly that such things still existed; but he added, "such power can only work on the weak or the wicked, for that heart whose dependance is wholly fixed on God, has a sure protection from every evil, whether of man or spirit. You have in your sacred book a full and ample delineation of the works of magic, in the period of Moses, and also of Saul. In later periods you have proofs of greater weight with you, where Christ cast out devils and gave the same power to His disciples. My opinion," he added, "will not alter yours, nor do I wish it; neither would I argue or dispute with you on subjects become obsolete in the enlightened world of which you are a member, but as far as my own individual opinion is concerned, it is my belief that all

things are possible to the Almighty power and will of God. And I see no right we have either to inquire why, or to dispute about the motives by which His wisdom permits the weak to be afflicted for a season, or the wicked to be punished in this life."

I inquired if he had ever witnessed any of the strange events I continually heard his people speak of, as having occurred in their neighbourhood, such as people possessed with unclean spirits, sufficient to confirm his belief in their probability. He replied, "I have not only witnessed but have, under Divine Providence, been the instrument to convey relief to several different women, who suffered from being possessed by evil spirits." He then related the following, which I copy from the notes I took at the time of his relation :—

"When I was a very young man, my mind was bent on inquiring into the truth of the generally believed opinion, that some righteous men of our faith had power granted to them to remove evil spirits from their victims. I took the advice of a certain venerable person, who was willing to impart his knowledge to me.

Preparatory to my own practice, I was instructed to forsake the haunts of man, and give myself wholly to prayer. Accordingly I absented myself from my home, family, and friends, and led the life you would call a hermit's; my food was simply herbs and fruits, and occasionally an unleavened cake of my own preparing, whilst the nearest tank of water supplied me with the only beverage I required; my clothing a single wrapper of calico; my house a solitary chupha (a thatch of coarse grass tied over a frame of bamboo), and this placed on the margin of a wood, where seldom the feet of man strayed to interfere with, or disturb my devotion. My days and nights were given to earnest prayer; seeking God and offering praises with my mouth to Him, constituted my business and my delight for nearly two whole years, during which time my friends had sought me in vain, and many a tear I fear was shed at the uncertain fate of one they loved so well in my father's house.

"The simplicity of my mode of life, added to the veneration and respect always paid to the Durweish's character, raised me in the

opinion of the few who from time to time had intruded on my privacy, to ask some boon within my limits to give as a taawise (talisman), which is in fact a prayer, or else one of the names or attributes of God, in such a character as best suited the service they required; for you must be told, in the Mussulmaun faith, we count ninety-nine different names or titles to the great merciful Creator and only true God. In many cases the taawise I had so given, had been supposed by the party receiving them, to have been instrumental in drawing down upon them the favour of God, and thus having their difficulties removed; this induced others, influenced by their report, to apply to me, and at last my retirement was no longer the hermit's cell, but thronged as the court-yard of a king's palace. My own family in this way discovered my retreat, they urged and prevailed on me to return amongst them, and by degrees to give up my abstemious course of life.

"The fame of my devotion, however, was soon conveyed to the world; it was a task to

shake off the entreaties of my poor fellow-mortals who gave me more credit for holiness of life than I felt myself deserving of. Yet sympathy prevailed on me to comfort when I could, although I never dared to think myself deserving the implicit confidence they placed in me.

"On one occasion I was induced, at the urgent entreaties of an old and valued friend, to try the effects of my acquired knowledge in favour of a respectable female, whose family, and her husband in particular, were in great distress at the violence of her sufferings. They fancied she was troubled by a demon, who visited her regularly every eighth day; her ravings when so possessed endangered her health, and destroyed the domestic harmony of the house.

"The day was fixed for my visit, and the first exercise of my acquirements; even then I had doubts on my mind whether the demons so often quoted did really exist, or were but the disordered wanderings of imagination; and if they did exist, I still was doubtful as to the extent of my knowledge being sufficient to

enable me to be the instrument for effecting the desired benefit. Trusting faithfully, however, in God's help, and desiring nothing but His glory, I commenced my operations. The woman was seated on a charpoy (bedstead) behind a wadded curtain, which hid her from my view. Respectable females, you are aware, are not allowed to be seen by any males except very near relatives. I took my seat opposite the curtain with the husband of the suffering woman, and entered into conversation with him on general subjects.

"I soon heard the wild speeches of the woman, and my heart fully sympathized in her sufferings. After preparing the sweet-scented flowers for my purpose (it is believed all aerial beings feed on the scent of flowers), fire was brought in a chafing-dish, at my request, and a copper plate was placed on this fire, on which I strewed my prepared flowers mixed up with drugs. Instantly the demon became furious in the woman, calling out to me, 'Spare me! spare me!'

"I should remark that the woman was so

entirely hidden by the curtain as to leave it beyond a doubt that she could not see what I was doing on the other side, but she seemed, by the instinct of the evil spirit which possessed her, to be thoroughly acquainted with the nature of my visit, and the exertion I was making by prayer for her release from the intruder. The women attending her, her friends and relatives, had no power to restrain her in the violence of her paroxysms; she tore the curtain with more than human force, and it gave way, leaving her and the other women exposed to my gaze.

"I would, from modesty, have retired, but her husband, having confidence in my ability to help his afflicted wife, whom he loved most tenderly, entreated me not to retire, but to think of the woman as my own sister. The woman, or rather the demon in the woman, told me what I was going to do was not withheld from her knowledge, desiring me immediately to leave the place.

"'Who are you?' I inquired.—'I am the spirit of an old woman, who once inhabited this

house;' was answered by a coarse harsh voice. —'Why have you dared to possess yourself of this poor female? she never could have done you any injury.'—'No,' was answered, 'not the female, but her husband has taken possession of this house, and I am here to torment him for it, by visiting his wife.'

"'Do you know that I am permitted to have power to destroy you in this fire?'—'Yes, but I hope you will shew mercy; let me escape and I will flee to the forest.'—'I cannot agree to this, you would then, being at liberty, fasten yourself on some other poor mortal, who may not find one to release him from your tyranny; I shall destroy you now;' and I was actually preparing my methods for this purpose, when the screaming became so violent, the poor woman's agony so terrific, that I dreaded her instant death from the present agony of her ravings.

"'How am I to know you are what you represent yourself to be?' said I, trying the softest manner of speech; (the poor victim appeared at ease immediately).—'Ask me any

question you please,' was replied, apparently by the woman, 'and I will answer you.' I rose and went into the front entrance of the house, which is divided from the zeenahnah by a high wall, as are all our Mussulmaun houses, and returned with something closely concealed in my hand. I asked, 'What is enclosed in my clenched hand?'—'A piece of charcoal,' was the prompt reply. It was so in truth; I could no longer doubt.

"Another of the party was sent to the outer house; and, again I inquired, 'What is in this person's hand?'—Grains of corn.'—'Of what nature?'—'Wheat.' The hand was opened, and the contents were really as was said;—confirming to all present, if they had ever doubted, that the poor woman was possessed by the demon, as I have before represented. Nearly two hours were spent in the most singular conversations, which, whilst they amused me exceedingly, convinced me by my own observations of the truth of that which I had but imperfectly believed before these trials.

"'I will certainly destroy you in this fire,

unless you give me ample assurances that you will never again annoy or torment this poor inoffensive woman;' and, as I presented my preparation, the screams, the cries of 'Spare me! oh, spare me this fiery torment!' were repeated with redoubled force. I asked, 'What is your belief?'—I believe in one God, the Creator of all things;' was promptly answered. —'Then away to the forest, the boon you first craved from me, nor again venture to return to this house.'

"The instant my command was given, the woman was calm, her reason restored immediately; her shame and confusion were beyond expressing by words, as she awoke from what she termed a dream of heavy terror that had overpowered her. The appearance of a strange man,—herself but half clad, for in the moments of raving she had torn off parts of her clothing, leaving the upper part of her person entirely uncovered,—nearly deprived her again of returning reason; her husband's presence, however, soothed her mind; but it was some time before her confusion was sufficiently banished to

enable her to converse freely with me. In answer to the questions I asked of her, she replied that she had not the least recollection of what had occured. She fancied herself overpowered by a dreadful dream which had agitated her greatly, though she could not recollect what was the nature of that dream. I ordered some cooling beverage to be prepared for my patient, and recommending rest and quiet, took my leave, promising to visit her again in my professional character, should any return of the calamity render my visit necessary. The whole family heaped blessings and prayers on my head for the benefit they believed I had been the instrument of Providence in rendering to their house.

"This was my first attempt at the practice I had been instructed in; and, you may believe, I was gratified with the success with which my endeavours had been crowned. For several months the lady continued quite well, when some symptoms of irritability of temper and absence of mind warned her husband and family of approaching danger upon which they

urged and entreated my second visit. I went accompanied by several friends who were curious to witness the effect expected to be produced by my prayer. It appeared the poor woman was more calm on my first entrance, than when I had previously visited her; but after repeating my form of prayer, the most violent ravings followed every question I put to her.

"Many hours were spent in this way. The replies to my questions were remarkable; she always answered, as if by the spirit with which she was possessed. I demanded, 'Why have you dared to return to this poor creature? do you doubt my ability to destroy you?' The reply was, 'I had no power to fix myself again on the woman, until you entered the house, but I have hovered over her.'—I said, 'I do not believe that you are the soul of a deceased old woman as you represent yourself to be; perhaps you may wish to convince me, by answering the questions that will be made by me and my friends.' The several questions

were then put and answered in a way that surprised all present.

Afterwards, I said, 'You professed when here on a former occasion, to believe in God. Answer me now, to what sect of people did you belong?'—'Sheikh,' was the reply, 'and I believe in one God of mercy and of truth.'—'Then you are my brother,' I said, rising, and holding out my hand to the woman, 'we will shake hands.'—'No, no!' replied the woman, with great agitation and terror, 'I beseech you not to touch me; the fire which I dread would then torment me more than I could bear. I would willingly shake hands with all here present, that would give me no pain, but with you the case is different; one touch of yours would destroy me immediately.' Not to prolong my story, at the husband's earnest entreaty, the evil soul was destroyed by the practice I had learned, and the poor woman, restored to health and peace, was no more troubled by her enemy."

When this story was related, I fancied it a

mere fable of the relator's brain to amuse his audience; but on a more intimate acquaintance with him, I find it to be his real opinion that he had been instrumental in the way described, in removing evil spirits from the possessed; nor could I ever shake his confidence by any argument brought forward for that purpose during many years of intimate acquaintance; which is the more to be regretted as in all other respects he possesses a very superior and intelligent mind, and as far as I could judge of his heart by his life, always appeared to be a really devout servant of God.

It is not surprising that the strongly grounded persuasion should be too deeply rooted to give way to my feeble efforts; time, but more especially the mercy of Divine goodness extended to them, will dissolve the delusion they are as yet fast bound by, as it has in more enlightened countries, where superstition once controlled both the ignorant and the scholar, in nearly as great a degree as it is evident it does at this day the people of India generally. Here the enlightened and the unenlightened are so

strongly persuaded of the influence of supernatural evil agency, that if any one is afflicted with fits, it is affirmed by the lookers on, of whatever degree, that the sick person is possessed by an unclean spirit.

If any one is taken suddenly ill, and the doctor cannot discover the complaint, the opinion is that some evil spirit has visited the patient, and the holy men of the city are then applied to, who by prayer may draw down relief for the beloved and suffering object. Hence arises the number of applications to the holy men for a written prayer, called taawise (talisman) which the people of that faith declare will not only preserve the wearer from the attacks of unclean spirits, genii, &c., but these prayers will oblige such spirits to quit the afflicted immediately on their being placed on the person. The children are armed from their birth with talismans; and if any one should have the temerity to laugh at the practice, he would be judged by these superstitious people as worse than a heathen.

LETTER XXVII.

Memoir of the life of Meer Hadjee Shah.—His descent.—Anecdote of a youthful exploit.—His predilection for the army.—Leaves his home to join the army of a neighbouring Rajah.—Adventures on the way.—Is favourably received and fostered by the Rajah.—His first pilgrimage to Mecca.—Occurrences during his stay in Arabia.—Description of a tiger-hunt.—Detail of events during his subsequent pilgrimages. — The plague. — Seizure by pirates.—Sketch of the life of Fatima, an Arabian lady.—Relieved from slavery by Meer Hadjee Shah.—He marries her.—Observations on the piety of his life.—Concluding remarks.

THE name of Meer Hadjee Shah has so often occurred in my Letters, that I feel persuaded a brief sketch of his life may be acceptable here, more particularly as that venerated man presented to my immediate observation a correct picture of the true Mussulmaun. I can only regret my inability to do justice to the bright

character of my revered father-in-law, whose conduct as a devout and obedient servant to his Maker, ruled his actions in every situation of life, and to whom my debt of gratitude is boundless, not alone for the affectionate solicitude invariably manifested for my temporal comforts, but for an example of holy living, which influences more than precept. This much valued friend of mine was the mouth of wisdom to all with whom he conversed, for even when intending to amuse by anecdotes, of which his fund was inexhaustible, there was always a moral and religious precept attached to the relation, by which to benefit his auditor, whilst he riveted attention by his gentle manners and well-selected form of words.

Before we met, I had often heard him described by his dutiful son, but with all that affection had prompted him to say of his father, I was not prepared to expect the dignified person I found him,—a perfect model of the patriarchs of old to my imagination, nor could I ever look at him through our years of inti-

macy, without associating him in my mind with Abraham, the father of his people.

His form was finely moulded, his height above six feet, his person erect, even in age, his fine cast of countenance beamed with benevolence and piety, and his dark eye either filled with tears of sympathy or brightening with joy, expressed both superior intelligence and intensity of feeling. His venerable flowing beard gave a commanding majesty to the figure before me, whilst his manners were graceful as the most polished even of European society. Raising his full eyes in pious thankfulness to God (whose mercy had thus filled his cup of earthly happiness to the brim), he embraced us both with a warmth of pressure to his throbbing heart, that pronounced more than his words, the sincerity of our welcome. Never have I forgotten the moment of our meeting. The first impression lasted through our long acquaintance, for he proved indeed a real solace during my pilgrimage in a strange land.

The subject of my present Letter, Meer Mahumud Hadjee Shah, was a native of Loc-

deeanah, the capital city of the Punjaab territory, so called from the five rivers which water that tract of country, and derived from punje (five), aab (water). He descended through a long line of pure Syaad blood, from Mahumud, many of his ancestors having been remarkable for their holy lives, and his grandsire in particular, a singularly devout Durweish, of whom are related in the family many interesting incidents and extraordinary escapes from peril, which distinguished him as a highly-favoured mortal. On one occasion, when attacked by a ravenous tiger, his single blow with a sabre severed the head from the carcase: the sabre is still retained in the family with veneration, as the instrument by which the power and goodness of God was manifested to their sire.

The father of Meer Hadjee Shah, was a Kauzy (Judge) of the city of Loodeeanah, a man greatly admired for his extensive knowledge of the Mahumudan law, respected for his general worthiness, and venerated for his holy life. He had a large family, of whom the

subject before me was the eldest son; his father designed to instruct and prepare him as his successor in the same honourable employment, whenever old age or infirmities should render his own retirement from the office necessary. But,—as the son always regretted when talking over the circumstance, with becoming remorse that his mind was differently swayed, —through an enterprising spirit he preferred the adventurous to the more sober calling for which his father had originally destined him.

To illustrate the temper of his youth, his often repeated anecdote of an event which occurred when he was but twelve years old may here be presented:—

"After our hours of study, boys of my own age were allowed to meet together for exercise and amusement, without the controlling presence of our Maulvees (tutors). Many an enterprising feat had been performed during our hours of play, but none that has impressed me with so keen a remembrance of my youthful follies as the one I am about to relate. We had long observed the wild pigeons, which

owned not any earthly master, take refuge for the night in an old and dilapidated well outside the town; a plan was laid between my companions and myself to possess ourselves of some of these pigeons, and one evening we assembled by agreement to put our project in force.

"A strong rope was procured, to which we fastened a piece of board, so as to form a seat; a bag was provided, into which the game was to be deposited as fast as it was caught; and a thick stick, with which to ascertain in the holes the situation of each pigeon, which was to be seized by the neck when thus discovered. Every thing was arranged when, 'Who will be lowered first?' was inquired by the head of our party. Meer Mahumud was not a little pleased when it was suggested, that he was the bravest boy among them; and with a proud feeling of ecstasy my young heart bounded whilst I seated myself on the board and was lowered from the summit for several yards down the well, my young companions holding fast the rope outside from which I was suspended; the bag conveniently slung across my

left shoulder, with the open mouth in front, to enable me to deposit my gleanings without delay.

"I had collected several pigeons in this way; and, at last, my stick was presented to search in a new aperture, where it seemed to be resisted by something more than the soft feathers of a bird; fearless as I was, my young hand was thrust into the hole, and I caught at something with a firm grasp, which at once convinced me could not be a pigeon; but I resolved not to part from my prize very readily, and drawing my hand and arm from the hole with great difficulty (putting all my youthful strength and energy to the task), I discovered my prize was a living snake of rather a large size.

"Fearful to announce the nature of my present prisoner to the youngsters, at whose mercy I then was, lest they, through terror, should let the rope go, and thus precipitate me to the bottom of the well, I called out, 'Draw up! draw up quickly! delay not, brothers!' and I was soon brought to the mouth of the well.

with the snake coiled round my arm, and firmly grasped just under the head, so that it could not extricate itself or injure me. The boys soon assisted me off the top of the well, and brought pieces of stone, with which they bruised the snake's head until I was relieved from its pressure on my arm by its death. I should remark, that I had presence of mind to rub the head against the wall on my ascent, which had considerably lessened the snake's pressure on my arm, and I believe it was more than half dead before I had reached the top.

"My arm pained me dreadfully, but still my greatest agony was for fear my father should hear of my exploit, which I felt convinced would not only excite his present anger, but be the means of preventing my having another opportunity of enjoying the society and amusements of my young companions. Strict secrecy was therefore enjoined by my command upon the whole party; and returning to my home, I thought to disguise my real feelings by seeking repose instead of the evening dinner which was prepared for me. My affec-

tionate mother had no suspicion that I was ill, although she was much distressed that play had destroyed the appetite of her son. I had dozed for some hours, when the agony of my arm awoke me as from an uneasy dream; I could hardly recollect the last evening's adventure, for my mind seemed much bewildered. My groans, however, brought my mother to my bed-side, whose tender care was exercised in fomenting my arm, which she found much swollen and inflamed.

"The secret of my enterprize was never divulged by me until the news of my sudden illness was reported in the neighbourhood; when some of my young friends told the tale, and it was conveyed by one of the gossiping old women of the city to the zeenahnah of my mother. My arm was for a long period rendered useless, and I was under the care of doctors for many months; the whole skin peeled off, and left me cause for remembering the circumstance, although it did not cure me of that preference for enterprize, which afterwards drew me from my home to visit other places,

and to search for new adventures. Often did I remonstrate with my father on the subject of my future profession: how often did I declare my disinclination to pursue those studies (deemed essential to fit me for the office I was in due time to be appointed to), and avow my predilection for a military life!"

At that period of Indian History, the Punjaab district was disturbed by the depredations of the Mahrattas. Hordes of those lawless banditti were in the habit of frequent encroachments on the Mussulmaun possessions, committing frightful enormities in their predatory excursions against towns and villages, spreading terror and desolation wherever they approached. On this account military ardour was encouraged by the heads of families, and the youth of respectable Mussulmauns were duly instructed in the use of defensive weapons, as a measure of prudence by which they were enabled, whenever called upon, to defend the lives and property of their neighbours as well as of their individual families.

In describing this period of his life, I have

often heard Meer Hadjee Shah confess with remorse, that he was wont to pay far greater attention to his military instructors than to the Maulvee's lectures on law or other dry subjects of books, as he then thought them, and at fourteen years old he was perfect master of the sabre, spear, matchlock, and the bow; able even then to defend himself against an enemy, or take the palm of victory, when practising those arts with the youth of his own standing.

At seventeen, his love of enterprize drew him from the calm study of his tutors under the parental roof, to seek amongst strangers employment better suited to his inclination. His early adventures were attended with many vicissitudes and trials, which would (however interesting to those who loved him) appear tedious to the general reader; I shall, therefore, but digress occasionally with such anecdotes as may be generally interesting. One which presents him in the early part of his career amongst strangers in a position which marks the bravery of his youth, I shall take the liberty of introducing in his own words:—

"After a good night's repose, I was desirous of pursuing my march, and prepared to take leave of my hospitable entertainer (a Kauzy of the village), from whom I had received the utmost attention and civility. This kind-hearted man was unwilling to allow of my journeying alone, and insisted that two of his menservants should accompany me that day's march at least. I had no fears, nor much to lose beside my life, and for some time resisted the offer, but without avail. The men therefore accompanied me, and after six hours walk, I prevailed on them to take refreshment and rest at the serai of the village, through which we had to pass, with leave to retrace their way home afterwards with my duty to their master.

"Released from their guardianship, I felt my own independence revive, and bounded on as lively as the antelope, full of hope that I might yet reach the Rajah's territory by night-fall, who, I had heard, was willing to give employment to the enterprising youth of Loodeeanah, in the army he was then raising. I must have walked since the morning near

twenty koss (forty miles) without food or water; but I neither felt hunger nor fatigue, so deeply was my heart engaged in the prospect of a military life. At length hunger awakened me to a sense of my forlorn condition, for I had left home without a coin in my possession; and although I passed through many inhabited villages where relief would have been gladly tendered, if I had only applied for it, yet my pride forbade the humble words of supplicating for a meal; hungry as I was, death even would have been preferable at that time to breathing out a want amongst strangers.

"I was overjoyed on approaching a cultivated tract of country to find a field of wheat, ripe for the harvest, evincing the great Creator's bountiful hand, and hesitated not, without a scruple, to possess myself of an occasional handful as I passed along, rubbing the ears and eating as I went, to save that time I deemed so precious; for my anxiety to reach the Rajah and employment, increased as the day advanced. I had traversed near thirty koss on foot, scarcely having halted since the dawning

day; this to a young man who had been through life indulged by the luxury of a horse for exercise, whilst under the parental roof, may be imagined to have been no trifling undertaking. But buoyant youth filled with hopes of honour and preferment is regardless of those difficulties which must subdue the indolent or less aspiring spirit.

"At the extremity of a large field through which I had to pass, my eye rested on a man with two oxen, certain indications, I imagined, of a well of water being adjacent for the purpose of irrigation, towards whom I approached sufficiently near to inquire if a draught of pure water could be obtained for a thirsty traveller. The sturdy farmer-looking man seemed to view me with scrutiny, without deigning to reply; my question was repeated with civility, but no answer was given, and I then fancied his looks foreboded no good meaning: he held in his hand a large heavy stick studded at the top with iron rings (in common use with the lower orders of people as a weapon of defence against robbers, tigers, wolves, or reptiles), but

as I stood far enough off to be out of immediate danger of a sudden attack,- if such was premeditated, the surly look of his countenance gave me little concern until he called out in a commanding tone, 'Youngster! off with your garments; lay down those bow and arrows instantly, or I will fell you to the earth with this staff that is in my hand!' which he raised in a position to prove himself in earnest.

"My surprise was great, but it did not put me off my guard, and I replied with courage, that his insolent demand would not meet with a willing compliance; I was able to defend myself, young as I was, against his treacherous intentions on an unoffending traveller; and I prepared my bow in the expectation that he would either be deterred, or leave me no alternative but to use it in self-defence. Two arrows were promptly prepared, one placed in my bow, the other in my girdle, as he advanced repeating his demand, with the countenance of a ruffian, and his club elevated; he no doubt fancied that the bow was a plaything in the hand of a mere ignorant stripling. I warned

him repeatedly not to advance, or my bow should teach him that my young arm was well instructed.

"He however dared my vengeance, and advanced still nearer, when seeing I had no alternative, I aimed at his legs, not desiring to revenge but to deter my enemy; the arrow entered his thigh, passing completely through: he was astonished and stood like a statue. I then desired him to throw down his club, with which I walked away, or rather ran a sufficient distance to relieve myself from further expectation of annoyances from my enemy or the villagers.

"Much time had been spent in that contest, which had left me the victor; I waited not however to witness his further movements, but with hastened steps, in half an hour I reached the Rajah's palace. Several soldiers were guarding outside the gate, where stood, as is usual, charpoys for their use, on one of which, uninvited, I seated myself, fatigued by my long and unusual exercise. The men with great civility offered me water and their hookha, and when refreshed

I answered their many inquiries, founded very naturally on my appearance, my youth, and travelling without an attendant.

"I frankly told them that the Rajah's famed liberality had drawn me from Loodeeanah to seek employment as a soldier under his command. One of my new acquaintance recommended my immediately going into the palace, where the Rajah was seated in Durbar (holding his Court) for the express purpose of receiving applicants for the army now raising, under the expectation of a hostile visit from the Sikhs. I followed my guide through several avenues and courts until we arrived at the Baarah Daree (twelve doors), or state apartments."

I must, however, here abstain from following Meer Hadjee Shah through the whole detail of his intimacy with the Rajah, which continued for some years, and by whom he was fostered as a favourite son; he accompanied the Rajah to the field against the Sikhs, whose singular habits and manners, both in battle and in their domestic circle, he has often amused his friends by relating.

His first pilgrimage to Mecca was undertaken whilst a very young man, travelling the whole way by land, and enduring many trials and hardships in what he deemed "The road of God." On one occasion he was beset by wolves whilst on foot; but as he always confessed his preservation was by the power and goodness of Divine Providence, so in the present instance the wolves even ran from the blows of his staff, howling to their dens.

During his stay in Arabia, when on his pilgrimage, his funds were exhausted, and he had no knowledge of a single individual from whom he could condescend to borrow, but as he always put his sole trust in God, a way was made for his returning prosperity in rather a singular and unexpected manner.

A rich Begum, the widow of a wealthy Arab merchant, had long suffered from a very severe illness, and had tried every medical prescription within her reach without relief. On a certain night she dreamed that a Syaad pilgrim from India, who had taken up his abode at the serai outside the town, possessed a medi-

cine which would restore her to health. She had faith in her dream, and sent a polite message to the Syaad, who was described minutely by the particulars of her dream. Meer Hadjee Shah attended the summons, but assured the lady who conversed with him, that he was not acquainted with medicine; true, he had a simple preparation, which enabled him to benefit a fellow pilgrim, when by circumstances no better adviser could be found: he then offered her the powder, giving directions how to use it, and left her. In the evening a handsome dinner was conveyed by this lady's orders to Meer Hadjee Shah, which he accepted with gratitude to God, and for several days this was repeated, proving a sensible benefit to him, and to others equally destitute of the means of present provision, who were abiding at the serai.

In the course of a week he was again summoned to attend the Begum, who was entirely cured of her long illness, which she attributed solely to the medicine he had left with her, and she now desired to prove her gratitude

by a pecuniary compensation. He was too much gratified at the efficacy of his simple remedy, to require further recompense than the opportunity he had enjoyed of rendering himself useful to a fellow-creature, and would have refused the reward tendered, but the lady had resolved not to be outdone in generosity; and finding how he was circumstanced by another channel, she made so many earnest appeals, that he at last consented to accept as much as would defray his expenses for the journey to the next place he was on the point of embarking for, where he expected to meet with his Indian friends, and a supply of cash.

On one occasion, he was exposed to danger from a tiger, but, to use his own words, "as my trust was placed faithfully in God, so was I preserved by Divine favour." The anecdote relative to that event, I cannot pass over, and therefore I relate it, as near as I recollect, in his own words:—

"I was at Lucknow during the reign of the Nuwaub, Shujah ood Dowlah, who delighted much in field sports; on one occasion it was

announced that he intended to hunt tigers, and orders were issued to the nobility and his courtiers, requiring their attendance on elephants, to accompany him on a certain day. The preparations were made on a grand scale, and excited a lively interest throughout the city. I had never been present at a tiger hunt, and I felt my usual ambition to share in the adventures of that day too irresistible to be conquered by suggestions of prudence; and accordingly I went, on horseback, accompanied by a friend about my own age, falling into the rear of the Nuwaub's cavalcade which was far more splendid than any thing I had before witnessed, the train of elephants richly caparisoned, on which were seated in their gold or silver howdahs, the whole strength of the Court in rich dresses.

"The hunting party had penetrated the jungle a considerable distance before a single trace of a tiger could be discovered, when at length, it was announced to the Nuwaub that the sheekaarees (huntsmen) had reason to believe one at least was concealed in the high grass

near which the party approached. The order was then given to loosen the led buffaloes, and drive them towards the grass which concealed the game, a practice at that time common with Native sportsmen, to rouse the ferocious animal, or to attract him, if hungry, from his lurking place; but it seemed as if the buffaloes were scared by the number of elephants, for with all the goading and whipping, which was dealt to them unsparingly, they could not be pressed into the service for which they were provided.

"The Nuwaub was remarkable for bravery, and prided himself on his successful shot; he therefore caused his elephant to advance to the edge of the high grass, that he might have the satisfaction of the first fire, when the animal should be roused. Some delay in this, induced the Nuwaub to order the dunkah-wallah (kettle-drummer) on horseback to be guarded on each side by soldiers with drawn sabres, to advance in front and beat his drums. The first sounds of the dunkah roused the tiger: this being instantly perceived, the horsemen wheeled round, and were in a second or two cleared from

danger. The tiger sprang towards the elephant, but was instantly thrown back by her trunk to a good distance, the Nuwaub taking aim at the same instant, fired and slightly wounded the animal, only however sufficiently to add to its former rage.

"My friend and myself were at this time (attracted by our eagerness to witness the sports) not many paces from the spot, when perceiving our dangerous position, retreat was the thought of the moment with us both: my friend's horse obeyed the signal, but mine was petrified by fear; no statue ever stood more mute and immoveable; for a second I gave myself up for lost, but again my heart was lifted up to the only Power whence safety proceeds, and drawing my sabre as the tiger was springing towards me (the same sabre which had been the instrument of safety to my grandsire in a like danger) as my arm was raised to level the blow, the animal curved his spring as if in fear of the weapon, brushed close to my horse's nose, and then stuck its sharp talons in the neck of another horse on which a Pattaan sol-

dier was seated: his horse plunged, kicked, threw his rider on the ground with a violence that left him senseless, his open sabre falling on the handle, which, like a miracle, was forced into the earth leaving the point upwards in a slanting position, just clearing his neck by a few inches.

"The tiger turned on the man with fury and wide-extended jaw, but was met by the sabre point, and the Pattaan's red turban, which fell at the instant; the tiger endeavouring to extricate himself from the entanglement, the sabre entered deeper through his jaw, from which he had but just released himself, when a ball from the Nuwaub's rifle entered his side and he slank into the grass, where he was followed and soon dispatched."

In his travels Meer Hadjee Shah had often been exposed to the dangerous consequences of the plague; but (as he declares), he was always preserved from the contagion through the same protecting care of Divine Providence which had followed him throughout his life. He has been often in the very cities where it

raged with awful violence, yet neither himself nor those who were of his party, were ever attacked by that scourge. On one occasion, he was, with a large party of pilgrims, halting for several days together at a place called Bundah Kungoon (the word Bundah implies the sea-shore), preparatory to commencing their projected journey to Shiraaz; he relates, that the mules and camels were provided, and even the day fixed for their march; but, in consequence of a dream he had been visited with, he was resolved to change his course, even should his fellow-travellers determine on pursuing their first plan, and thereby leave him to journey alone in an opposite direction.

He made his new resolution known to the pilgrims, and imparted to them the dream viz., "Go not to Shiraaz, where thou shalt not find profit or pleasure, but bend thy steps towards Kraabaallah." His companions laughed at his wild scheme, and as their minds were fixed on Shiraaz, they would have persuaded Meer Hadjee Shah to accompany them; but,

no, his dream prevailed over every other argument, and he set out accompanied by two poor Syaads and fifteen mendicant pilgrims, embarking at Kungoon on a small vessel for Bushire, which by a favourable wind they reached on the third day. Here they first learned the distressing intelligence that the plague had raged with frightful consequences to the population; and during their few days' sojourn at Bussorah, he says, many victims fell by that awful visitation. The city itself was in sad disorder, business entirely suspended, and many of the richer inhabitants had fled from the scene of terror and dismay. No accommodation for travellers within his means could be procured by Meer Hadjee Shah, and he was constrained to set out on foot with his companions, after providing themselves with provisions for a few days.

Unused to walk any great distance of late, and the effects of the short voyage not being entirely removed, he grew weary ere the first day's march was ended; "But here," he says, "I found how kind my Creator was to me,

who put it into the hearts of my companions to take it by turns to carry me, until we arrrived within sight of Feringhee Bargh (Foreigner's Garden), where we found many of the healthy inhabitants from Bushire had, with permission, taken refuge, some in tents, others without a shelter; and in their haste to flee from danger, had forsaken all their possessions, and neglected provision for present comfort; a change of garments even had been forgotten in their haste to escape from the pestilential city.

"Never," he says, "shall I forget the confusion presented at this place nor the clamorous demands upon us, whom they esteemed religious men, for our prayers and intercessions that the scourge might be removed from them. I could not help thinking and expressing also, 'How ready weak mortals are to supplicate for God's help when death or affliction approaches their threshold, who in prosperity either forget Him entirely or neglect to seek Him or to obey His just commands.'

"The next day our march led us to the vicinity of a large populated town. We halted

near a plantation of date-trees, and one of our mendicant pilgrims was dispatched with money to purchase bread and dates for our sustenance, with instructions to conceal, if possible, our numbers and our halting-place, fearing that the inhabitants might assail us with stones if it were suspected that we came from the infected city. The quantity of food, however, required for so large a party excited suspicion, but our preservation was again secured by Divine interference.

A Dirzy from the city visited our resting-place, and finding we were pilgrims, asked permission to travel with us to Kraabaallah, which was readily agreed to, and when a host of men were observed issuing from the town, this man, who was an inhabitant ran towards them, explained that we were all healthy men, and interested several Arab-Syaads to come forward and befriend me and my party, which they readily assented to on finding that brother Syaads were in danger. The Kauzy of the town hearing all the particulars attending us, came to the spot which we had selected for

our halt, presented his nuzza of twenty-one dinars to me, entreated pardon for the intended assault he had in ignorance authorized, obliged me to accept his proffered civilities, and we remained several days in the enjoyment of hospitality in that town, where we had at first such strong reasons to anticipate violence and persecution; but this could not be whilst the arm of the Lord was raised to shelter His confiding servants. To Him be the praise and the glory for every preservation I have been favoured with! and many were the perils with which I was surrounded in my walk through life, yet, always safely brought through them, because I never failed putting my trust in His mercy and protection who alone could defend me."

On one occasion of his pilgrimage to Mecca, Meer Hadjee Shah, with all his companions on board a trading ship, off the coast of Arabia, were attacked by pirates, and taken prisoners; but, as he always declared, the goodness of Divine Providence again preserved him and those with him from the hands of their ene-

mies. In the event in question, he undertook to speak for all his party to the Arab chief, before whom they were taken prisoners, and having a thorough knowledge of the Arabic language, he pleaded their joint cause so effectually, that the chief not only liberated the whole party, but forced presents upon them in compensation for their inconvenient detention.

The most interesting, if not the most remarkable incident which occurred to Meer Hadjee Shah in his journey through life, remains to be told. The story has been so often related by his own lips, that I think there will be little difficulty in repeating it here from memory. It may be deemed prolix, yet I should not do justice by a farther abridgment.

FATIMA'S HISTORY.

"Fatima was the daughter of Sheikh Mahumud, an Arab, chief of a tribe, dwelling in the neighbourhood of Yumen, who was a wealthy man, and much esteemed amongst his people. His wife died when Fatima, their only child, was but six years old, and two years

after her father also was taken from this world, leaving his whole estate and possessions to his daughter, and both to the guardianship of his own brother, Sheikh ———, who was tenderly attached to the little girl, and from whom she received the fostering care of parental solicitude.

"This uncle was married to a lady of no very amiable temper, who seized every opportunity of rendering the orphan daughter of his brother as comfortless as possible, but her uncle's affection never slackened for an instant, and this consoled her whenever she had trials of a domestic nature to distress her meek spirit.

"When Fatima had reached her sixteenth year, an eligible match being provided by her uncle, it was intended to be immediately solemnized; for which purpose her uncle went over to Yumen to make preparations for the nuptials, where he expected to be detained a few days; leaving with his niece the keys of all his treasuries, whether of money or jewels.

"On the very day of his departure from

home, a brother of his wife's arrived at the mansion, and required, in Fatima's presence, a loan of five hundred pieces of silver. This could only be obtained by Fatima's consent, who firmly declared her resolution not to betray the trust her uncle had reposed in her. The wife was severe in her censures on her husband's parsimony, as she termed his prudence, and reviled Fatima for being the favoured person in charge of his property. This woman in her rage against the unoffending girl, struck her several times with violence. Situated as their residence was, apart from a single neighbour, she feared to stay during her uncle's absence, and left the house not knowing exactly where to seek a temporary shelter; but recollecting a distant relation of her mother's resided at Bytool Faakere, no great distance off (within a walk as she imagined), she left her home without further reflection, unattended by a single servant.

"When within a mile of her destined place of refuge, she was observed by a party of Bedouin robbers, who descended from their

hill to arrest her progress, by whom she was conveyed to their retreat, almost in a state of insensibility from terror and dismay. Arriving at their hut, however, she was cheered by the sight of females, one of whom particularly struck her as being very superior to her companions, and in whose countenance benevolence and pity seemed to indicate a sympathizing friend in this hour of severe trial. The women were desired to release the prisoner Fatima of her valuables, which were, in accordance with her station, very costly both in pearls and gold ornaments.

"Fatima overheard, during the night, some disputes and debates between the robbers, about the disposal of her person, one of whom was single, and declared his willingness to marry the girl, and so retain her with them; but Fatima had, when she was seized, recognized his countenance, having seen him before, and knew that his connexions lived in the town of Bytool Faakere, which she had unguardedly declared. The robbers, therefore, dreaded detection if her life was spared; they were not by nature san-

guinary, but in this case there seemed no medium between their apprehension and the death of Fatima.

" The female, however, who had at first sight appeared so amiable and friendly, fulfilled the poor girl's impressions, by strenuously exerting her influence, and eventually prevailed, in saving the orphan Fatima from the premeditated sacrifice of life; and as no better arrangement could be made to secure the robbers from detection, it was at length agreed she should be sold to slavery. This decided on, the swiftest camel in their possession was prepared at an early hour, a few short minutes only being allowed to Fatima, to pour out her gratitude to God, and express her acknowledgments to her humane benefactress, when she was mounted on the camel's back, with the husband of that kind-hearted female.

" With the prospect of continued life, poor Fatima ceased to feel acute agony, and bore the fatigue of a whole day's swift riding without a murmur, for the Bedouin's behaviour was marked with respect. Towards the evening, as

they drew near to a large town, the Bedouin halted by the margin of a forest, and the long night was passed in profound silence, with no other shelter than that which the forest afforded; and at the earliest dawn the march was again resumed, nor did he slacken his speed, until they were in sight of Mocha, where he designed to dispose of his victim. She was there sold to a regular slave-merchant, who was willing to pay the price demanded when he saw the beautiful face and figure of the poor girl, expecting to make a handsome profit by the bargain.

"The Bedouin made his respectful obedience and departed in haste, leaving poor Fatima in almost a state of stupor from fatigue. Left however to herself in the slave-merchant's house, she seemed to revive, and again to reflect on the past, present, and future. Her escape from death called forth grateful feelings, and she felt so far secure that the wretch who had bought her, had an interest in her life, therefore she had no further fear of assassination. But then she reverted to her bonds; painful indeed were the reflections, that she who had been

nobly born, and nursed in the lap of luxury, should find herself a slave, and not one friendly voice to soothe her in her bondage. She resolved however (knowing the privilege of her country's law) to select for herself a future proprietor.

" Her resolution was soon put to the test; she was summoned to appear before a fisherman, who had caught a glimpse of her fine figure as she entered Mocha, and who desired to purchase her to head his house. The poor girl summoned all her courage to meet this degrading offer with dignity. A handsome sum was offered by the fisherman, as she appeared before him to reject the proposal. ' Here is your new master, young lady,' said the slave-merchant; ' behave well, and he will marry you.'

" Fatima looked up, with all her native pride upon her brow, ' He shall never be my master!' she replied, with so much firmness, that (astonished as they were) convinced the bargainers that Fatima was in earnest. The merchant inquired her objection, as she had betrayed no

unwillingness to be sold to him, she answered firmly, whilst the starting tear was in her eye, 'My objection to that man is our inequality: I am of noble birth. My willingness to become your slave, was to free me from the hands of those who first premeditated my murder; and sooner than my liberty should be sold to the creature I must detest, this dagger,' as she drew one from her vest, 'shall free me from this world's vexations.'

"This threat settled the argument, for the slave-merchant calculated on the loss of three hundred dinars he had paid to the Bedouin; and Fatima, aware of this, without actually intending any violence to herself, felt justified in deterring the slave-merchant from further importunities. Several suitors came to see, with a view to purchase the beautiful Arab of noble birth, but having acted so decidedly in the first instance, the merchant felt himself obliged to permit her to refuse at will, and she rejected all who had made their proposal.

"Meer Hadjee Shah, in the fulfilment of his promise to his wife at parting, to take home

a slave for her attendant, happening at that time to be passing through Mocha, inquired for a slave-merchant: he was conducted to the house where Fatima was still a prisoner with many other less noble, but equally unhappy females. Fatima raised her eyes as he entered the hall; she fancied by his benevolent countenance that his heart must be kind; she cast a second glance and thought such a man would surely feel for her sufferings and be a good master. His eye had met hers, which was instantly withdrawn with unaffected modesty; something prepossessed him that the poor girl was unhappy, and his first idea was pity, the second her liberation from slavery, and, if possible, restoration to her friends.

"When alone with the slave-merchant, Meer Hadjee Shah inquired the price he would take for Fatima? 'Six hundred pieces of silver (dinars),' was the reply.—'I am not rich enough,' answered the pilgrim; 'salaam, I must look elsewhere for one:" and he was moving on.—'Stay,' said the merchant, 'I am anxious to get that girl off my hands, for she is

a stubborn subject, over whom I have no control; I never like to buy these slaves of high birth, they always give me trouble. I paid three hundred dinars to the Bedouin for her, now if she will agree to have you for her master, (which I very much doubt, she has so many scruples to overcome), you shall add fifty to that sum, and I will be satisfied.'

"They entered the hall a second time together, when the merchant addressed Fatima. 'This gentleman desires to purchase you; he is a Syaad of India, not rich, he says, but of a high family, as well as a descendant of the Emaums.' — 'As you will,' was all the answer Fatima could make. The money was accordingly paid down, and the poor girl led away from her prison-house, by the first kind soul she had met since she quitted her benefactress in the Bedouins' retreat.

"Fatima's situation had excited a lively interest in the heart of Meer Hadjee Shah, even before he knew the history of those sufferings that had brought her into bondage, for he was benevolent, and thought she seemed unhappy:

he wanted no stronger inducement than this to urge him to release her. Many a poor wretched slave had been liberated through his means in a similar way, whilst making his pilgrimages; and in his own home I have had opportunities of seeing his almost paternal kindness invariably exercised towards his slaves, some of whom he has, to my knowledge, set at liberty both male and female, giving them the opportunity of settling, or leaving them to choose for themselves their place of future servitude.

"But to return to Fatima. On taking her to his lodgings, he tried to comfort her with the solicitude of a father, and having assured her she was free, inquired where her family resided, that she might be forwarded to them. The poor girl could scarce believe the words she heard were reality and not a dream; so much unlooked-for generosity and benevolence overpowered her with gratitude, whilst he addressed her as his daughter, and explained his motives for becoming her purchaser, adding, 'Our laws forbid us to make slaves of the offspring of

Mussulmauns of either sex; although be it confessed with sorrow, unthinking men do often defy the law, in pursuance of their will; yet I would not sell my hopes of heaven for all that earth could give. I again repeat, you are free; I am not rich, but the half of my remaining funds set apart to take me to my home in India, shall be devoted to your service, and without any delay I will arrange for your return to Yumen, under safe convoy;' (and seeing she was about to express her gratitude to him): 'Forbear, as you respect me, a single word of acknowledgment; if any thanks are due, it is to that good Providence who hath preserved you from greater evils, to Whom be offered also my humble praises, that through His mercy my steps were directed through Mocha, at such a time as this, when an unprotected female required fatherly protection.'

"Fatima was in tears during this speech of her true friend, and when he paused, she said, 'Heaven, indeed, sent you to my aid; you seem like a guardian angel. Much, much I fear to be separated from one so pious and so

bountiful. May I not again be thrown into similar scenes to those your generosity has been exercised to release me from? Who but yourself and my own dear uncle could ever feel that lively interest for my preservation?'

"Meer Hadjee Shah would willingly have conveyed the poor girl to her uncle's residence near Yumen, had it been possible; but his arrangements were made to sail by an Arab ship to Bombay, which if many days postponed would detain him nearly another year from India, where he was aware his return was expected by his wife and family; and he was not willing to give them cause for uneasiness, by any further delay; he however went out to make inquiries at Mocha for some safe means of getting Fatima conveyed to her uncle.

"In the mean time she revolved in her mind the several circumstances attending her actual situation in the world, and before the next morning had well dawned, she had resolved on urging her kind protector to take her with him to India, before whom she appeared with a more tranquil countenance than he had yet

witnessed. When they were seated, he said, 'Well, Fatima, I propose to devote this day to the arrangement of all things necessary for your comfort on your journey home, and to-morrow morning the kaarawaun sets out for Yumen, where I heartily pray you may be conducted in safety, and meet your uncle in joy. Have no fears for your journey, put your entire trust in God, and never forget that your safety and liberation were wrought out by His goodness alone.'

"'Huzerut (revered Sir),' she replied, 'I have weighed well the advantages I should derive by being always near to you, against the prospects of my home and wealth in Arabia, which I am resolved to relinquish if you accede to my proposal. Let me then continue to be your slave, or your servant, if that term is more agreeable to my kind master. Slavery with a holy master is preferable to freedom with wealth and impiety. You must have servants, I will be the humblest and not the least faithful in my devoted services.'

"The pious man was surprised beyond mea-

sure; he attempted to dissuade her, and referred to his wife and children in India. 'Oh! take me to them,' she cried with energy; 'I will be to them all you or they can desire.' This arrangement of Fatima's was rather perplexing to him; her tears and entreaties, however, prevailed over his preference, and he quieted her agitation by agreeing to take her to India with him.

"After maturely weighing all the circumstances of the voyage by sea, and the long journey by land from Bombay to Lucknow, he came to the determination of giving Fatima a legal claim to his protection, and thereby a security also from slanderous imputations either against her or himself, by marrying her before they embarked at Mocha; and on their arrival at Lucknow, Fatima was presented to his first wife as worthy her sympathy and kindness, by whom she was received and cherished as a dear sister. The whole family were sincerely attached to the amiable lady during the many years she lived with them in Hindoostaun. Her days were passed in piety and peace, leaving not

an instance to call forth the regrets of Meer Hadjee Shah, that he had complied with her entreaties in giving her his permanent protection. Her removal from this life to a better was mourned by every member of the family with equal sorrow as when their dearest relative ceased to live."

It is my intention (if I am permitted), at some future period, to write a more circumstantial account of Meer Hadjee Shah's adventures through life, than my present limits allow. In the mean time, however, I must satisfy myself by a few remarks founded on a personal observation and intimacy during the last eleven years of his eventful life. His example and precept kept pace with each other, "That this world and all its vanities, were nothing in comparison with acquiring a knowledge of God's holy will, and obeying Him, in thought, in word, and deed."

He was persuaded by the tenets of his religion that by exercising the body in the pilgrimage

to Mecca, the heart of man was enlightened in the knowledge and love of God. He found by obeying the several duties of the religion he professed, and by enduring the consequent trials and privations of a pilgrimage without regard to any feelings of selfish gratification or indulgent ease, that, his nature being humbled, his love to God was more abundant.

His law commanded him to fast at stated periods, and although he was turned of seventy when I first saw him, yet he never failed, as the season of Rumzaun approached, to undergo the severity of that ordinance day by day during the full period of thirty days; and it was even a source of uneasiness to my venerated friend, when two years prior to his decease, his medical friends, aided by the solicitude of his family, urged and prevailed on him to discontinue the duty, which by reason of his age was considered dangerous to health, and perhaps to life. Prayer was his comfort; meditation and praise his chief delight. I never saw him otherways than engaged in some profitable exercise, by which he was drawing near to his Creator, and

preparing himself for the blessedness of eternity, on which his soul relied.

During our eleven years' constant intercourse, I can answer for his early diligence; before the day had dawned his head was bowed in adoration to his Maker and Preserver. At all seasons of the year, and under all circumstances, this duty was never omitted. Even in sickness, if his strength failed him, his head was bowed on a tray of earth, to mark his dutiful recollection of the several hours appointed for prayer. The Psalmist's language has often been realized to my view, in him, "Seven times a-day do I praise thee, O Lord," and "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee," when witnessing his undeviating observance of stated prayer duties; and when those duties were accomplished, even his amusements were gleaned from devotional works, visits of charity, and acts of benevolence. I never saw him idle; every moment was occupied in prayer or in good works. His memory was retentive, and every anecdote he related was a lesson calculated to lead the mind of his auditor to seek,

trust, and obey God, or to love our neighbour as ourselves.

The many hours we have passed in profitable discourses or readings from our Holy Scripture, and the lives of the Prophets have left on my memory lasting impressions.

I was, at first, surprised to find Meer Hadjee Shah so well acquainted with the prominent characters of our Scripture history, until the source from whence his knowledge had been enlarged was produced and read aloud by my husband every evening to our family party. The "Hyaatool Kaaloob" (a work before alluded to) occupied us for a very long period, each passage being verbally translated to me by my husband. When that work was finished, our Holy Scripture was brought forward, which, as I read, each passage was again translated by my husband, either in Persian or Hindoostaunie, as best suited the understanding of our party at the time. So interesting was the subject, that we have been five or six hours at a time engaged without tiring or even remembering the flight of those moments

which were devoted, I trust, so beneficially to us all.

Meer Hadjee Shah's views of worldly enjoyments resembled the Durweish's in principle; for he thought it unworthy to heap up riches, to swell his wardrobe, or to fare on sumptuous diet; but his delight consisted in sharing the little he could at any time command with those who needed it. He possessed an intelligent mind, highly cultivated by travel, and a heart beaming with tenderness and universal charity: so tempered were his affections by a religious life, that the world was made but a place of probation to him whilst looking forward with joy to the promises of God in a happy eternity. His purity of heart and life has often realized to my imagination that "Israelite in whom (our Redeemer pronounced) there was no guile."

I must here draw my Letters to a conclusion, with many an anxious wish that my gleanings in the society of the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun may afford profitable amusement to my friends and to those persons who may honour my work with a perusal, humbly trusting

that the people whose character, manners, habits, and religion, I have taken upon me to pourtray, may improve in their opinion by a more intimate acquaintance.

In my attempt to delineate the Mussulmauns, I have been careful to speak as I have found them, not allowing prejudice to bias my judgment, either on the side of their faults or virtues. But I deem it incumbent to state, that my chief intimacy has been confined to the most worthy of their community; and that the character of a true Mussulmaun has been my aim in description. There are people professing the faith without the principle, it is true; but such persons are not confined to the Mussulmaun persuasion; they are among every class of worshippers, whether Jew or Gentile throughout the world.

Of my long sojourn in the society of the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun, I need here but remark, that I was received amongst them without prejudice, and allowed the free usage of my European habits and religious principles without a single attempt to bias or control me;

that by respecting their trifling prejudices as regards eating and drinking, their esteem and confidence were secured to me; and that by evincing Christian charity, (which deters the possessor from proud seeming), I believe, I may add, their affection for me was as sincere, as I trust it will be lasting.

It may be regretted, with all my influence, that I have not been the humble instrument of conversion. None can lament more than myself that I was not deemed worthy to convince them of the necessity, or of the efficacy of that great Atonement on which my own hopes are founded. Yet may I not, without presumption, hope my sojourn, with reference to a future period, may be the humble means of good to a people with whom I had lived so many years in peace? I must for many reasons be supposed to entertain a lively interest in their welfare, and an earnest desire for their safety, although at the present moment I can distinguish but one advantage accruing from our intimacy, namely, that they no longer view the professors of Chris-

tianity as idolators. They have learned with surprize that the Christian religion forbids idolatry,—thus the strong barrier being sapped, I trust it may be thrown down by abler servants of our Lord; for the Mussulmauns are already bound by their religion to love and reverence Christ as the Prophet of God: may the influence of his Holy Spirit enlighten their understandings to accept Him as their Redeemer!

Like the true Christian, they are looking forward to that period when Jesus Christ shall revisit the earth, and when all men shall be of one faith. How that shall be accomplished, they do not pretend to understand, but still they faithfully believe it, because it has been declared by an authority they reverence, and deem conclusive. Often, during my acquaintance with these people, have I felt obliged to applaud their fidelity, although, in some points, I could not approve of the subject on which it was displayed—their zeal at Mahurrum, for instance, when they commemorate the martyrdom of the grandchildren of their Prophet,—

I have thought "had they been favoured with the knowledge we possess, what zealous Christians would these people be, who thus honour the memory of mere holy men."

The time, I trust, is not very far distant when not one nation in the whole world shall be ignorant of the Saviour's efficacy, and His willingness to receive all who cast their burden at the foot of His cross. My heart's desire for the people I have dwelt amongst is that which St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans declares to be his prayer to God for Israel, "that they might be saved!" and I know not any way in which I could better testify my regard for the Mussulmauns collectively, or my gratitude individually, than by recommending the whole of the tenth chapter of the Romans to the serious consideration of those persons who possess such influence, as that the gospel of peace may be preached to them effectually by well-chosen and tried servants of our Lord, who are duly prepared both in heart and speech, to make known the glad tidings to their understandings that "God so loved the

world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" that "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" and that "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Should the view I have conscientiously given of their character be the humble means of removing prejudice from the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun, so that they may be sought and won by brotherly kindness, my humble heart will rejoice that my labours, as an observer and detailer, have been successful through the merciful orderings of Divine Providence.

THE END.

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